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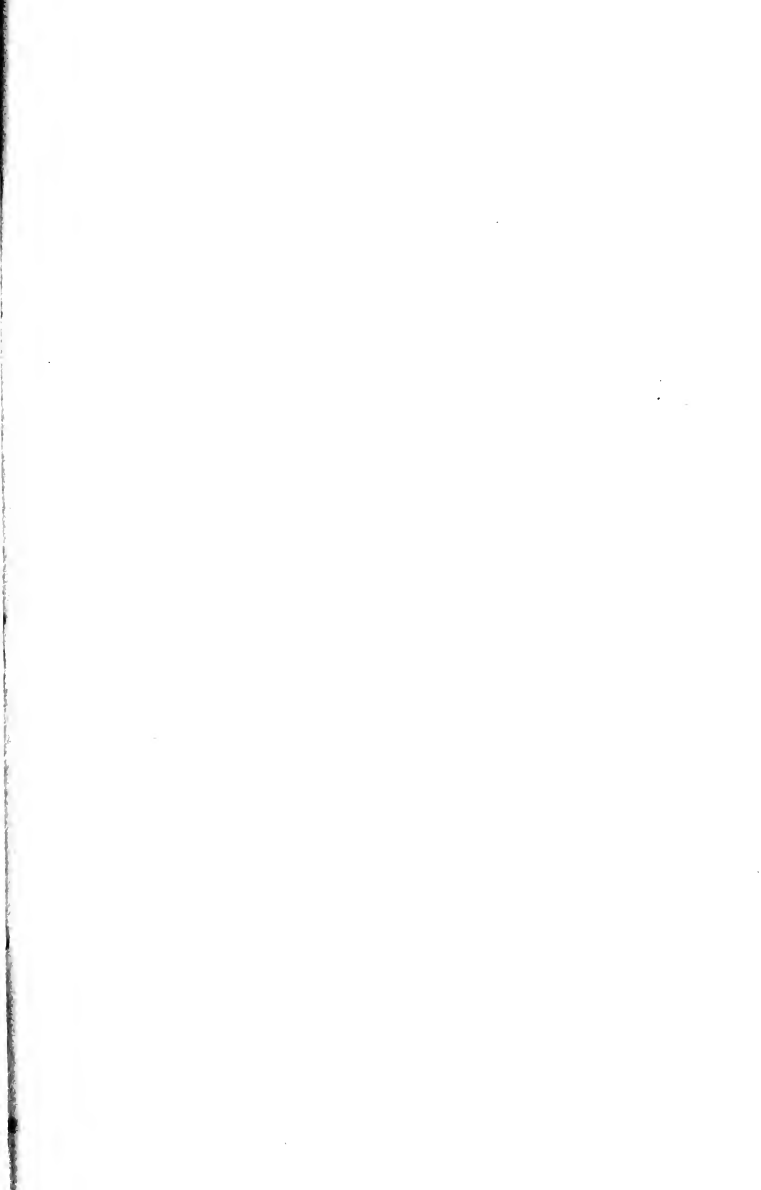
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HENRY MASTERTON.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
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Dorset-street, Fleet-street.

HENRY MASTERTON;

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG CAVALIER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," "DARNLEY," &c.

Nay, droop not : being is not breath ;
'Tis fate that friends must part :
But God will bless in life, in death,
The noble soul, the gentle heart.

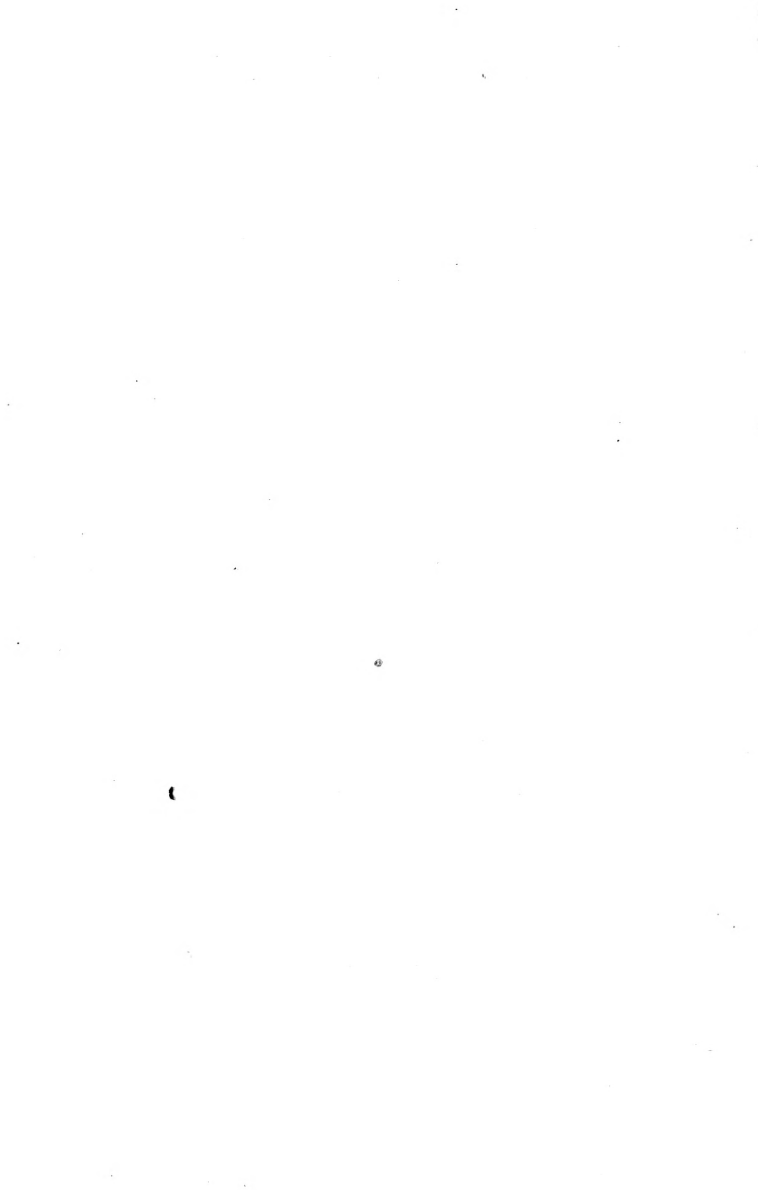
J. G. LOCKHART.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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LONDON :
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1832.



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HENRY MASTERTON.

CHAPTER I.

I OPENED my eyes to the light of day, on the shores of that part of the British Channel where the narrow seas which interpose between France and England first show an inclination to spread out into the Atlantic Ocean.

My father's house—— Oh, what a multitude of thrilling memories, of early years, and happy dreams, and gall-less pleasures, rise up at the very name, mingling with the forms of the loved and dead, and the tones of sweet voices that are heard no more.—My father's house was raised upon the summit of one of those high cliffs which guard the coast of Devonshire; and, sweeping round within view of

the windows, was a small beautiful bay, not a league and a half in diameter, within which the blue waters of the sea collected deep and still, as if for the purpose of repose. Bold high rocks, of a similar character to that on which our dwelling was perched, flanked the bay to the east ; and, on the west, a long range of sandy shores extended towards the Atlantic, sloping gradually up into green fertile hills, whose high tops, covered with rich woods of oak and beech, sheltered the calm expanse below from the wild gales that race across the wide ocean beyond. In some places those woods would sweep down the sides of the hills till they almost dipped their branches in the sea ; and—following the bend of the bay, at a greater or less distance from the shore, during more than one half of its extent—they reached unbroken to the eastern angle of Masterton house, as my parental mansion was called ; and then, broken into scattered clumps of fine old trees, planted themselves in the valleys and the dells, and gave a character of antique grandeur to the scenery round.

Through these trees and woods, down the

sides of the cliffs, among the valleys inland, and the deep coves and inner bays by the sea shore, was a perfect labyrinth of paths and walks, connected in the remembrance of my youth with a thousand childish adventures and exploits ; and here, as we often proved in our boyish sports, a person well acquainted with the spot might baffle the pursuit even of others who possessed as intimate a knowledge of its intricacies as himself.

The house itself presented nothing particularly worthy of description. It was one of those, many of which were destroyed in the civil wars, sufficiently defensible to bid defiance to a small force, but too weak to resist a regular siege for any length of time. The rooms, the chimneys, and the staircases were numerous ; and though all of these, except the chimneys, were small, yet sufficient space had been thrown away to build forty of any such houses as have been constructed in the present day.

Having given so far an account of our dwelling-place, and the country round it, I have now to speak of those by whom it was inhabited ; and I must begin somewhat prior to my own

recollections, in order to render my after history clear and intelligible.

Up to the time of my birth, my father, I have been told, held an office of high trust and honour at the court of King Charles I., and his character greatly assimilating with that of the monarch whom he served, a long prospect of advancement, power, and splendour, was laid open before him. Naturally fond of the country, he would have spent his whole time in Devonshire, had not his official station required his presence almost continually in London. My mother, however, whose tastes were better suited to a court than those of my father, was obliged by his especial wish and command to remain far from the capital; and her husband — who was rather fond of martyrizing his feelings to his duty, sometimes, even without much necessity — imagined that by abandoning a country life and domestic joys, he was making an inestimable sacrifice to his King. Thus, feeling himself, in his commune with the monarch, less the person obliged than the person obliging, he assumed, it was reported, a certain degree of independence

and authority, to which no man was in general less inclined to submit than the King. The cause of his giving way to it so long in the case of my father, was probably that his dignity was always secure in the rigid and somewhat formal respect with which my worthy parent did not fail to accompany his opposition of the royal will or his obdurate assertion of his own opinion. He would not have deviated from that decorous reverence, for the world ; and, while he was practically telling his Majesty that his actions were madness or his words were folly, he was declaring in set terms, his profound deference for the royal wisdom. There existed also, as I have said before, a great similarity of feeling in many respects between the monarch and his servant ; the very rigid adherence to particular theories, however opposite those theories might be, was a part of the same character. The same imperturbable, almost melancholy calmness, existed in both ; the same fearlessness of consequences, but, in my father's case, without the same paroxysms of irresolution, which at times unnerved the King ; the same devoted desire of doing right ; but also the same imperious

manner of enforcing what they judged to be so, in opposition to the reasons, prejudices, or feelings, of every one else.

Such sources of sympathy did in all probability act in attaching the sovereign to my father; but upon what principle existed the great, undeviating, and devoted friendship which did exist between Lord Masterton and the Earl of Langleigh, I confess I am at a loss to know. From all I have ever heard, there never yet breathed the air of this globe two people more dissimilar in every respect, except in the basis of unswerving honour and integrity, than Lord Langleigh and my father. The one light, gay, quick, vehement; the other calm, stern, cold, determined. Lord Langleigh, with all his keen good sense and shrewd wit, set high value upon a thousand trifles which my father contemned and despised. He would not have fought a duel for the world, without his peculiar and appropriate hat, nor lain down by his wife without his particular and appointed night-cap; and yet, by his bold and reckless spirit, he would often bring himself into situations where

he was obliged to fight with any hat that happened to cover him, or sleep without any night-cap at all.

Such conduct, in the eyes of my father, was the acme of human absurdity, and yet for Lord Langleigh he had the most sincere regard and the most genuine respect. They had been early, long, and constant friends; and they had found through life, that while the original uprightness of their intentions generally ensured a similarity of purpose, in any moment of difficulty, the quick wit of Lord Langleigh would often suggest an expedient that had not struck the slower mind of my father; while the steady judgment of Lord Masterton would often avert a danger which would have fallen on his more precipitate friend. Thus a mutual confidence and esteem had been born and grown up between them, although a number of the actions of each were matter for jest or reprehension to the other.

A period, however, arrived, towards the time of my birth, which tried their friendship by the test of adversity. The King's determination to support the prerogative of the

crowd by every effort, met the strongest approbation of the two friends, till they found that that determination went farther, and menaced the liberty of the subject ; but from that moment their opposition was fixed.

The sincere affection which they both felt towards their royal master, and which made them more fearful perhaps for his honour and safety than even for the freedom of their country, induced them to take those measures of thwarting his most dangerous designs, which were likely, if discovered, to prove perilous to themselves and irritating to him.

It is by no means my purpose to enter here into the well-known historical details of the period. Suffice it to say, that my father and Lord Langleigh became the dupe of their own schemes. They were foolish enough to believe the sincerity of a body of men who professed moderation, to co-operate with a party from which they differed in ultimate objects, to imagine that all men really sought the good of their country who called themselves patriots, and to confide in an individual who talked continually of his honour. Of course they were

used as tools, and despised, till they discovered their mistake, and were betrayed at the moment they hoped to retrieve their error.

On finding that two of his privy council had been guilty of the weakness, if not the crime to which I have alluded, the King called them to his presence; and though a lingering feeling of regard, and the conviction that their intentions were better than their deeds, prevented him from pursuing the stern and unrelenting measures which his harsher counsellors advised, he dismissed them from their offices at once, and forbade them ever to shew themselves at his court again.

My father bowed in silence and withdrew, determined to obey the command to the letter. Lord Langleigh replied, that he hoped a year and a day would be sufficient to make his Majesty change his counsels, his counsellors, and his commands; and retired as if from the most indifferent conversation.

The mortification, the bitterness, and the humiliation, which my father felt most keenly, he proceeded to bury in the country, where he arrived in time to be present at my birth, and

to close the eyes of my mother, whose death was the consequence of my existence. Lord Langleigh, on the contrary, proceeded on a tour of pleasure, forgot the disgrace he had suffered, enjoyed to the full new scenes, new society, and new amusements; married, became a father, and returned to the court within two years.

Though separated during this period, the two friends had not ceased to correspond; and their regard had increased, rather than diminished, under their reverses. But shortly after the return of Lord Langleigh to the court, his letters to my father were interrupted for two months; and, at length, the news of his committal to the Tower, his trial, and his condemnation for high treason, reached Lord Masterton in Devonshire. My father instantly set off for London with all speed; and arrived in time to offer consolation and sympathy to his friend, if he could not afford him assistance. His own fate Lord Langleigh had borne with easy firmness. He acknowledged to my father that he had, since his return to London, been more imprudent than before he left it; and, though he

solemnly averred that he had never entertained a treasonable design, yet he confessed that the judgment which had been passed upon him had been justified by strong cause of suspicion. Death he looked upon as a man of the most dauntless courage may regard a scarecrow ; and all the pomp and circumstance of public execution he spoke of with a jest ; but the doom which *he* feared not, had gone with fatal effect to the bosom of his wife. She had done all that woman could do to move an inflexible monarch. She had used prayers, and tears, and influence in vain. She had sunk under the united effects of grief and exertion ; and, a week before the time appointed for the death of her husband, her spirit had left a world of sorrow, for a brighter and a happier place of dwelling. In regard to her, Lord Langleigh dared not speak with my father, for it was a subject that unmanned him ; but of his child—his little Emily—he spoke long and fondly. He gave her into my father's charge, and exacted a promise from him that he would watch, and guard, and cherish her, as his own. The promise was willingly made ; and, in addition,

my father voluntarily pledged himself to see her married to his eldest son, as soon as years admitted of their union.

I have often heard my father describe the scene which took place when this promise was made. It was the last night Lord Langleigh had to live; and when he spoke of his child, the severing of that dear tie shook him more than the parting from life itself: like the breaking chord of some fine instrument, it vibrated through a thousand corresponding tones of feeling in his heart. He wept bitterly, as for the last time he kissed the infant cheek of the last bond between him and earth; and, bidding the nurse take her from him, he wrung my father's hand, solemnly repeating the injunctions he had given respecting her.

"Now, leave me, Masterton," he said, "leave me. In parting with that child, I have already felt the edge of the axe. What is to come," he added, resuming his composure, "is but as mounting my horse to go and join my other Emily, who has set out before me; and the way, thanks to the executioner from Calais, is short and easy. I have yet one other friend

to take leave of," he continued, " a poor, good youth, that, in happier days, I helped to his promotion ; and who now, by some evil chance, has fallen upon the rueful task of captain of the guard over me. He waits to see me, for the last time, ere he leads me to the block ; so fare thee well, Masterton, fare thee well ! We part in this world ; but, through Christ, we shall be reunited in Heaven !"

A young officer entered as my father passed out ; and the two friends separated, never to meet again. The next morning passed in horror to my father, who remained with the infant child of his friend, counting the last moments of that friend's life. The execution was ordered for noon ; but about nine o'clock, the door of my father's chamber was thrown open, and a messenger of the privy council appeared, charged to bring Lord Masterton before that body. My father, of course, obeyed at once ; but, as they proceeded, he naturally endeavoured to ascertain from the messenger the cause of the very unexpected summons which he had received. The officer was in no degree reserved, and replied directly, " that he believed

there was matter of accusation against my father, for contriving and aiding the late escape of Lord Langleigh from the Tower."

The joyful exclamation which the sudden news of his friend's evasion called from my father's lips, was sufficient proof to the messenger that his prisoner was not only innocent of the charge, but ignorant of the deed. The privy council, however, were not so easily satisfied, and my father was himself committed to the same prison that had received his friend, after having learned, that, early in the morning of that day, it had been discovered that both Lord Langleigh and the captain of the guard had disappeared, leaving no trace whatever of their flight. For eleven days my father remained a prisoner; but during that time the Government strained every nerve to overtake the fugitives; and, though they did not succeed in that endeavour, they ascertained that the unfortunate nobleman who was the object of their search, had only escaped one sort of death to encounter another.

Two persons, it was discovered, similar in appearance to the prisoner and his companion,

had reached Sheerness early on the morning of their escape, and had embarked on board a Dutch vessel, which had appeared there on the preceding day. Violent gales of wind succeeded ; and, after having been seen during the whole day endeavouring to get clear of the coast, the vessel was hidden by the night, only to be found a wreck upon the Kentish shores the next morning. One person alone was saved by the fishermen of Deal ; and he was so bruised by the falling of one of the masts, and by being dashed against the beach, that his life was only protracted for a few hours. During that time, however, he acknowledged that he had perished in endeavouring to secure the escape of Lord Langleigh from the doom pronounced on him by law ; and made a confession of the means he himself had used, as captain of the guard, to open the gates of the Tower to his former patron. His death followed, before he could be examined by any competent authority ; but as his words went to acquit every one of any knowledge of the facts but himself, my father was dismissed from imprisonment, and suffered to return to retirement and his family.

CHAPTER II.

SUCH were some of the events which preceded the period of my own personal recollection—a period to which I shall for the future confine myself. The first objects of my remembrance, though certainly faint and far away, are not so much misty and indistinct, as they are separate and detached. Many particular incidents I can still recal with more vivid indentity, more clear precision, than the occurrences of the year just past; but these incidents are things apart and unconnected with the general course of existence, — small green oases on which memory rests in the midst of the wide desert of forgetfulness. I remember myself a little boy of between four and five years old, playing with a beautiful little girl of about two

years less in age ; and I have not forgot that my elder brother Francis, who was at that time nearly ten, made me cry most bitterly, by telling me that she was not my wife but his. Emily Langleigh, however, clung to me ; and my brother, who loved me dearly, soothed me again into tranquillity, by telling me I should keep her if I would not cry. Several other childish incidents of the same nature, are impressed upon my memory ; but they are by no means of sufficient value to justify narration ; and I shall content myself with giving a sketch of our early years, which passed without much incident or variety, notwithstanding the great and stirring events that were taking place around.

The disappointment of his ambition, the humiliation of his pride, the death of his wife, and the loss of his friend, had all more or less contributed to add both gloom and sternness to my father's character ; and the unquestioning obedience with which his commands were uniformly met, within his own domains, rendered him from day to day more imperious in his manner, although the melancholy reserve which

pervaded his whole mind, made his orders few ; and his natural sense of equity and humanity caused them in general to be such as were easily fulfilled. But he allowed not a moment's hesitation or doubt in their execution ; and the steady clearness of his own intellect scarcely suffered him to make allowance for diffidence or misconception. Thus in his own family, and by his own domestics, he was feared and respected, rather than loved ; and in the neighbourhood, which was but scantily peopled, he was more esteemed than liked. Even his attachment, to his children, which was great, was controlled by a certain sternness which, though it did not deprive him of our affection, mingled our fondness with terror ; and our only way of showing our love was by a watchful anxiety to catch and obey the slightest expression of his will.

The greater part of my father's time was passed in solitude, if that can be called so, where the society of the learned and the wise of other days—a society which we can form on calm reflection and select without offence,—supplies the place of that living crowd, which

we must take at venture as it comes; and in which we cannot winnow the gold dust from the drossy sand. His library was his chief resort; and there, I have remarked, the principal subjects of his study were those arts of policy which he had renounced for ever, or that philosophical facility of temper and demeanour which he never by any chance displayed.

His exercise, taken at stated hours, always combined some other purpose. It was either devoted to pay some visit of stately ceremony to the neighbouring gentry, or to teach, or witness the instruction of my brother in some of those polite exercises for which he had himself been famous—the management of his horse, the use of his sword, to shoot, to wrestle, or to swim.

At a very early age I also was admitted to witness these sports, though not permitted to take a part in them, farther than in riding the immemorial pony, which had carried me, I believe, before I could walk. Mine, however, was all the eagerness and all the excitement of the scene. My father and brother passed through the various feats and evolutions of the

riding-school and the regiment, with the same steady calmness ; and while my heart throbbed with ardour and anxiety, while my young eye flashed, and my cheek glowed with pleasure and expectation, it seemed to them, but a matter of mere practice, to be taught by the one, and acquired by the other, without their feelings being at all moved in the employment of the hour.

Thus passed the time, while the fewness of the years which either my brother or myself had numbered, rendered the difference of our ages more decided ; but as we both grew up, and I too began to mingle in the more manly exercises with which he was still proceeding, a great change took place in our relative situation.

No two creatures on earth could be more different in character and disposition than Frank and myself ; and yet, be it ever remembered, that we loved each other throughout, most dearly.

He was a singular being, my brother, and it is only by snatches of what he did, that his character can be clearly understood. In my early youth he seemed to regard me as a sort

of pet, which was to be spoilt and chastised; fondled, loved, and controlled: and, in truth, I believe that during all our mutual lives, he continued more or less to consider me in the same light. Nay, even long after we had grown up, when my impetuosity burst all thralldom, it only seemed as if he lent the power into my own hands, which it was his to exercise over me, and let me have my own way more as a favour than a right.

And yet, though he loved me, and though I loved him—for on every occasion where his voice, or his hand, or his talents would support or aid me, they were exerted in my behalf—yet he never, or but rarely, gave me his confidence. Indeed, it was not in his nature to do so. He was naturally reserved and grave, fond of long and solitary rambles, and of deep thought, across the cloud-like sombreness of which, the lightning of enthusiasm seemed seldom or never to break. Still, he was not without passions; but, though naturally strong and overpowering, they were not easily excitable; and, requiring ever external objects to call them into action, seemed to have no original source

in his own mind ; or, like the fire of a volcano, to lie hid deep under mountains of grey dust and ashes.

The pursuits that engaged him were not, in general, like those of other youths. Profound and abstract studies, long, abstruse calculations, would occupy him day after day and night after night, till his bright brown eye would wax dim with watching, and his dark black hair would grow tangled and dishevelled with intense neglect. But then again he would spring upon his horse, and ride like some of the fiendish horsemen of a German tale, the cavalier and his beast seemingly inspired by but one will, defying space and obstacles, and time and fatigue. Or he would catch up his gun, and day after day roam through the woods performing feats of marksmanship that almost repel belief. Then again he would lie idle and listless on the grass in the sun, to use his own expression, “ like the village natural at an inn-door,” and comment quaintly on the absurdities of man—of whom he knew little or nothing ; and the hatefulness of cities—that he had never seen !

Though the natural character of his mind was a sort of gloomy reserve, yet there would occasionally intervene moments of a happier mood in which, as the humour prompted, he would display great powers to interest and amuse, or to censure and to sneer, or to reason and confute. Even in those early years he was a most accomplished sophist; and with a vein of casuistry, which he had acquired Heaven knows where, he would have out-argued the cunning father of all false reasoning himself. Yet he never appeared to have any sort of eagerness, or to feel any sort of excitement in all the various occupations in which he consumed his time. If he argued, it was with cool precision, and apparently more for the sake of victory than from any deep impression of the justice of the proposition he supported. When he read, he cared not for interruption; and would lay down and resume his book with perfect indifference, though, when left to himself, he would pore over it for days together. Were he called on to stop while urging his horse forward in full career, he would bring him up at once, without a

change of aspect, or an appearance of haste ; and when following with his crossbow a deer in the spring, no rapid energy betrayed the fatal certainty of his aim.

My own feelings towards Frank were certainly of a mingled character. By right of primogeniture, rank, station, and fortune were his ; while the fortune of my mother, though it secured me competence, was but a younger brother's portion, and approached not near to affluence. Yet far was it from me to envy my brother's superior expectations. Of the splendour and the wealth that awaited him, I entertained not one jealous desire. On the contrary, I thought of his possessing all that could honour or distinguish him, with pleasure and with pride ; and, contented with the second station in my family, I would willingly have added, had it been in my power, to the riches and the lordships of my house's head.

But his talents and his skill, I confess, I envied. The perfect ease with which he seemed to do every thing that to other men required long practice and exertion, was the object of my vain endeavour, and the subject

of many a bitter mortification. I felt that I was not deficient either in mental or corporeal powers. I had as much facility in acquiring knowledge or art as most of those whom I encountered ; and at a very early period, when I witnessed my brother's superiority, I resolved by close application to outdo him, especially in manly exercises. But it seemed as if he had got a start of me in the race of life, which I was never to recover. After long and constant practice, I called him to try his carbine at the target. My bullets lodged within the inner ring, but his cut the bull's eye on every side. With the foils it was the same. No exercise put me on a par with him ; and it was only in riding, to which we had both been accustomed from our very infancy, that I could at all compete with him on equal terms.

Many a time, after some unsuccessful trial, have I gone and sat for hours in some of the deep nooks of the bay, pondering gloomily over my own want of success, and trying in vain to discover by any effort of my mind, what was the flaw in my nature, which rendered all my efforts so ineffectual. No feeling of

anger towards my brother, however, ever mingled with my meditations. I was dissatisfied with myself; and the more so, as I found that my very eagerness rendered my failure more certain. When by any chance the sons of the neighbouring gentry entered into competition with me in the sports to which we were accustomed, feeling confident by constant practice, I far excelled what I could ever accomplish when my brother was my rival; and I believe he purposely avoided all such meetings, in order to let me carry off the prizes of the day.

It must be remarked at the same time that, even had not such been his motive, I do not think he ever would have sought any of these assemblies. In this we differed as much as in any other part of our characters. He hated and shunned society; and in general, when forced by circumstances to mingle with others of his own age and rank, remained silent and inactive; wrapped in an impenetrable reserve, which was mixed up of both pride and shyness. To me, on the contrary, society was more frequently a delight. I loved, it is true,

to ramble in solitude over the rocks, or through the woods, or by the side of the calm blue fanciful sea; or to skim over its bosom, alone in my own boat, and dream sweet dreams of a splendid and a fragrant world, that existed but in my own imagination. But then when these dreams were dreamt, I loved to have some one to share them with; and to say to them what I would do, and how I would act, when I should be suffered to go forth into the visionary place, which I fancied was laid out before my steps. I was fond of the beauties of nature too. I delighted to perch myself upon some high ground on a day of mingled cloud and sunshine, and mark the different aspects of the scene, as the broad masses of shadow were driven across the face of the country by the wind—now, seeing tower, and town, and wood as, all involved in deep shade, they rested in picturesque darkness on a bright and sunny background of hill beyond; and now, watching them as they emerged into clear light, and smiled up in the fulness of the rays, while the shadow of the cloud hurried rapidly over the uplands behind.

Every nook of our own woods too—whether,

breaking suddenly away, they afforded a wide grand prospect over the sea and its shores of bold and broken rock ; or, gathering round some fountain, or bending over the lapse of some pure stream, they formed a sweet home scene, of calm and mild repose — every nook was known, and loved, and familiar, to my footsteps. The face of all the rocks also ; each path, each angle ; every sea-side cove, every cave and every bay, were visited in turn ; and were the haunts of a thousand wild dreams and enthusiastic imaginings. And yet, as I wandered through the beautiful country that surrounded our dwelling, I longed to have some one to share my fancies and my pleasures, to admire where I admired, and dream along with me. At length those longings found an object ; and my imagination fixed upon a person, whose coming was not far distant, whom I determined to lead through all the spots I loved myself, and with whom I proposed to renew all the enjoyment of a lovely scene and a lovely season.

This person was Emily Langleigh, who at seven years of age had been sent by my father

to a convent in one of the neighbouring islands, to acquire all those feminine accomplishments, which could not so well be procured in the dwelling of a widower in Devonshire. She had now reached thirteen years of age; and Lord Masterton had wisely determined to withdraw her at that period from the care of the good nuns, whose instructions had gone as far as he desired; and to establish her in his own house, till her age should permit her union with my brother, who had now attained his twentieth year. The arrangements for that union were fully understood by the whole family; and I, at fifteen, prepared to receive Emily Langleigh as my sister.

I dreamed then of showing her, in the capacity of a brother, all that could please, or interest, or amuse in the spot she had so long quitted; for I had perfectly settled in my own mind — whether from a thorough acquaintance with my brother's character, or from my own wishes, I know not — that the ciceroneship of the place would be left in my hands. With boyish ardour and eagerness, I pictured to my mind's eye the pleasure she would feel in this beautiful

scene, or that curious object ; and my whole dreams—dangerous ones they were—consisted in contributing to her amusement, or witnessing her delight. Nevertheless, there was not one idea amongst all that went on in my heart and in my brain, that had aught of offence in its nature. Not a feeling, not a thought possessed my breast which I wished, or could have wished, my brother not to see. So far from it, with the gay and somewhat teasing liveliness of my youthful disposition, I jested him continually upon the coming of his future wife ; and attributed to him feelings of anxiety and agitation, which I knew he was very far from experiencing. Still farther. I even contemplated standing by his side when Emily Langleigh gave him her hand at the altar, and partook in anticipation of the happiness that was to be theirs.

As the time came near for Emily's arrival, my delight ran off in a thousand extravagances, which called down upon my head a reprimand from Lord Masterton ; and as I broke a horse for Emily to ride, or new-rigged my boat for

Emily to sail, my brother looked on with a smile, that was anything but gay.

At length Emily Langleigh arrived at Masterton House, a bright, pretty creature, of little more than thirteen; with a figure and features which, though yet scarcely formed, afforded the promise of a very lovely girl hereafter.

My father stood on the steps to receive her, and by his side my brother Frank, for whom, as a matter of propriety, I made way. But though Lord Masterton was particularly kind to his young ward, and though he greatly softened towards her the stern asperity of his general demeanour, my brother met her in one of his coldest moods, remained profoundly silent; and, if he offered her some little attentions which he could not avoid, his politeness was somewhat scanty.

Emily herself had been made aware of the engagement entered into between my father and hers; and raised her beautiful hazel eyes towards my brother's face, with a look of imploring anxiety, well calculated to win its way to the inmost recesses of the heart; but there

was nothing answered her; and, repelled at once into herself, she turned to me with lighter and less embarrassed feelings, and received my gay and warm salute, as cheerfully as it was given.

That first interview seemed the type of the future demeanour of all the parties. The arrival of Emily changed not in the least the usual conduct of my brother. He would indeed, sometimes, as if out of pure perversity, request her presence to see some curious object, or beg to escort her on some particular ride, when I had laid out a totally different expedition; but in general he remained as much alone, as grave, as studious, as if she had never entered the house. Towards him, on the contrary, Emily's behaviour was all that was excellent. The slightest wish he expressed she was prompt to obey; all his actions were approved, all his words were listened to; and it seemed that having made up her mind to become his wife, she was practising beforehand the conduct which might be proper in that station.

To me she was all frank kindness, easy, unaffected, unembarrassed; and towards me too, all

that girlish gaiety broke forth, which in the presence of my brother was restrained by an unconquerable timidity. She would laugh with, she would jest with me, she would tease me; and roaming like two wild things through the woods, and by the sea shore, the keen encounters of our young wits would vary the bursts of enthusiastic pleasure, which the sight of every new beauty would call forth. Many a little accident occurred to us in our rambles, many a little service I rendered the fair girl, who every day and every hour was expanding into more splendid loveliness; and in the course of our almost uninterrupted companionship we laid up a treasure of mutual thoughts, and feelings, and memories, which none knew or shared in but ourselves.

The idea of rivalry between Frank and myself, never entered the imagination of my father, or Emily, or me. We all considered it as a thing so perfectly out of the question, that we took no care to obviate a danger which we did not believe to exist. Whether my brother ever dreamed of a growing affection between Emily and myself, or not, he took no pains to

guard against it either ; and when, by that assumption of superiority and power over me which I have before-mentioned, he had—as often happened—given me pain and offence, he would send Emily to find me out, in the solitude to which I had carried my indignation, for the purpose of soothing and consoling me, and bringing about a reconciliation.

The tones of her voice as she came on such messages of peace, became dear, too dear to me, as time flew on ; and yet, as I have said, I had not even an idea of what was passing in my heart. Various circumstances, indeed, should have given me a better insight into my own mind. I never placed her on her horse without feeling my whole frame thrill. Once when an unexpected influx of the sea forced me to bear her across a little bay in my arms, I felt my heart beat far more than haste, or danger, ever occasioned. I experienced I knew not what painful sensations too, when she praised my brother's skill and grace in all military exercises ; and I gradually grew sad when she was absent, and cheerful only when she was near. I remarked also, that Frank often turned his eyes,

first upon her, and then suddenly upon me ; and more than once, about two years after Emily's arrival, my brother's servant, Gabriel Jones, broke in upon our solitary rambles.

Having mentioned this man's name, I may as well say a few words more of his character. He was as artful a villain as ever lived ; but, according to the puritanical fashion of the day, he strove to cover his knavery under the garb of sanctity.

At that time, religious fanaticism raged in England as a species of epidemic, and every cunning rogue used it as a cloak for his deeper designs. My brother Frank, however, understood his valet's character well ; and used to declare in his cynical moods, that he would rather be served by a skilful knave than an honest fool. But the master who chooses such a servant should never let his judgment sleep, or give one moment the rein to his passions. In many instances, Frank at once detected his knave's arts, and used them quite contrary to Master Gabriel's intentions ; but at other times, though not the dupe, my brother was the sufferer, and had to regret deeply that he had, to

use his own expression, “condescended to play a game at chess with his own servant, and had made one false move.”

The person who filled about my person the same dignified station, was a youth of much less pretensions, and more honesty. He was not, like Gabriel, a puritan in any thing ; and far less like Gabriel, a puritan in taste and sentiment. He could not judge the feeling expressed in a pale pink doublet, or a bright blue vest. He could neither tie a sword-knot in fifty different fashions ; nor could he proportion the rose to the shoe it was to grace, with the exquisite precision of a London haberdasher. But William Fells had a simple shrewdness which served him as well as Gabriel Jones’s artful cunning ; and he had, besides, a quick hand, a bold heart, a ready wit, and a frame of iron.

Whatever were Gabriel’s motives for watching Emily and myself,—and whether he, in the base slyness of his own nature, attributed to us schemes and purposes of concealment which we never dreamed of, I feel certain that my brother was perfectly guiltless of all connivance in his

espionage. On the contrary, whenever Frank's eye rested on me and Emily together, there seemed a melancholy glance of regard towards us both, which never shone in them on any other occasion, and which implied any thing but jealousy or suspicion. One day, indeed, I remember entering his antichamber, when the valet was in the act of hanging his sword over my brother's shoulder, and had apparently been insinuating doubt of some one — for Frank, as I approached, replied aloud in his calm, logical manner :—

“ No, no, Master Gabriel, it is the worst policy in the world ever to bear an appearance of doubt towards another, till he have given you just cause. Your suspicion may make an enemy, but it can never gain a friend ; and a man who is distrusted, finding he has nothing to gain by honesty, or to lose by villainy, very often becomes a knave through having been suspected of being so.”

What had been the previous conversation I do not know, or whether it referred to me at all, or not ; but the moment I advanced, Gabriel cut short his reply at the “ Verily, now,”

which was bursting from his lips, and the matter dropped.

Such was the state of my family, till the period when Emily attained her seventeenth, and I my nineteenth year. Another year was to see her the bride of my brother ; but events in the mean time had been taking place around us, which must be noticed before proceeding any farther, as they had a material influence on all my after-fate.

CHAPTER III.

NEVER yet, perhaps, in the history of this strange globe which we inhabit, had a private family, possessing considerable public influence, wealth, station, and repute, been suffered to enjoy such undisturbed tranquillity, in the midst of the most tremendous civil strife, as that which we continued to possess, during the wars of the great rebellion. Those errors in the government of Charles I. which my father had early seen and endeavoured to oppose, acting with the passions, the follies, and the bigotry of an excited people, had gradually arrayed one-half of the country against the other. Ambition, fanaticism, and patriotic as well as religious zeal, had been too strong for gallant devotion and enthusiastic loyalty ; the

peculiar follies of the puritans had invigorated themselves, and drawn many to their cause ; while the peculiar follies of the cavaliers, had weakened their own party, and alienated their friends. Success had crowned the efforts of the rebels ; and the unhappy monarch of England had by this time trusted to the Scots, and been sold to the English. Scarcely a nobleman in Great Britain had not drawn his sword in behalf of one or other of the contending parties, and yet Lord Masterton had been suffered to remain perfectly neuter, without annoyance from any of the factions which tore his distressed country.

The cause of this conduct, and the immunity which attended it, was to be found in various circumstances. When deprived of his office, and dismissed from the councils of the king nineteen years before, my father had been told by the monarch's own lips, that he was discharged from his service for ever, and had been warned never to show himself in the sovereign's presence again. On that occasion, my father, in the bitterness of his heart, had vowed to obey to the letter ; and never—what-

ever were the misfortunes which the conduct he had opposed might bring—to exert either his mental or corporal powers, in behalf of a monarch he judged ungrateful.

With a man of my father's disposition, the oath itself not only remained binding under all circumstances, but the impressions under which it had been taken, were never in the slightest degree effaced; and he beheld the whole progress of the calamities which fell both on Charles and his people, with grief indeed; but without one effort to support either of the parties, into which the country had become divided.

There was a time in the civil war, when the aid and influence of such a man might have turned the scale in favour of the King; and an officer of high station near the person of Charles, visited my father about that period. No change, however, resulted from their conference. The officer and Lord Masterton parted with cold civility, and the house resumed its quiet.

To Charles himself, the neutrality of Lord Masterton was of course far more favourable

than his enmity ; and as the King well knew that his sword, though not wielded in his favour, would never be drawn against him without some deep provocation, he took care that the most scrupulous respect should be paid to his property, by the royal adherents in all parts of the country.

On the other hand, the Commonwealth party had not forgot that my father had been one of the first sufferers from opposing that extension of the prerogative, which gave them their original ground of complaint. They looked upon him, therefore, as in some sort a martyr to their own cause ; and were at first in great hopes that he would openly espouse their side, in the hostilities which soon took place. Although disappointed in this, they too were glad to suffer him to remain neutral ! and as he made no levies of armed retainers, and took no steps which could be regarded as military preparation, farther than the defence of his own house and property required, they remained satisfied that that neutrality was sincere and unfeigned.

His former friendship with Fairfax greatly

contributed to relieve my father from any of those military visitations, which the parliamentary generals did not scruple to inflict upon all who were doubtful in their politics ; and the situation of Masterton House, in a remote part of Devonshire and on the sea-coast, removed it from the general line of march of the fanatical forces.

All these circumstances combined to afford us more perfect immunity from the troubles and disasters to which England in general was subject, than perhaps any other house could boast. It is true that from time to time my father received a summons to attend the Parliament at Westminster or at Oxford, and I have seen him so far moved as to take two slow and silent turns in the great hall, before his determination seemed fixed ; but never more. He always found some good and valid excuse for withholding his presence, and those anxieties passed away. It is true also that every day we heard of battles fought, of beleaguered cities, and of all the turns of the long and deadly struggle which tore the bosom of our country. But neither my brother nor myself were permitted

to share any farther in the strife, than by offering our prayers for the King's success.

It was impossible to stand calmly by, and witness all the exciting events which were passing around us, without feeling an ardent desire to take some part in the contest ; and where is the youth, who, in his eager gaze over the busy scene in which he has never mingled, does not attribute to himself powers and energies to will and do, far more than the might of man could ever accomplish ? Oh how I dreamed of glory and of victory ! and how sincerely I believed that, were my arm but free and a hundred stout troopers at my back, I could have turned the fate of any of the thousand fields that were fought and lost in the King's cause.

Nay, one day, I did the boldest thing that it was in my conception to do. I remonstrated with my father on the indifference to which he not only compelled himself, but me. It was not long before the fatal surrender of the monarch to the Scottish troops, and Lord Masterton happened to be in a far milder and more easy mood than he usually displayed. He had been talking to me with kindness and confi-

dence, and the conversation naturally turned to the passing occurrences of the day. I spoke youthfully and ardently; and for some time my father listened with a smile, one of the very few I ever saw beam upon his lip. He even went farther, and explained to me his views in regard to the result of the war. The King, he said, would soon be obliged to accede to the proposals of the Parliament, and would then re-assume the reins of government. The terms imposed would doubtless at first be hard enough, he said, but then, the more moderate of all parties, gradually recovering from the phrensy of civil strife, would soon unite with the true friends of the monarch to regain for him that full portion of power, which ought to be entrusted to the chief magistrate for the benefit of the whole community.

His arguments, however, did not satisfy me. It seemed to me that the parties in the state were farther and farther dividing, instead of uniting; and that the only likely termination to their strife was in the extinction of the weaker. In the mean while I thought that the best blood of the country was being shed, her com-

merce, her agriculture, her arts, were going to ruin, and a thousand evils were daily impressed by fate with the stamp of certainty, which no problematic benefits could ever outvalue, while he—and, as I believed many others—stood inactive, when their influence might have terminated the struggle, and restored peace to England.

All this, and perhaps much more, I should probably have poured forth in the warmth of my feelings ; but my father stopped me in full career. “Be satisfied, Sir,” he said, “that I shall do my duty to my country and to myself, as becomes me ; and if ever the time should come, that the King be really in danger, as some men judge even now, you, Henry, and your brother shall have, not only liberty, but command, to peril all in defence of the monarchy.”

He spoke sternly, and I was silent ; but an adventure in which I was engaged not many months after, served to hasten the period which was to see our family also enter with tardy steps the arena of civil contention.

On the morning of one fine day in the middle of June, I had laid out a scheme for taking Emily quite across the bay in my boat, to visit

the beautiful ruins of St. Helen's Abbey, which lay amongst the woods on the other side. Emily had agreed to make the excursion, the boat was prepared, and every thing promised us a day of pleasure, when my brother deranged our whole plan by asking whether Lady Emily Langleigh would not accompany him to fly his hawks on the banks of the stream. Emily at once assented; and I, mortified and angry, got up from the breakfast-table, where the proposal was made, and, descending to the court, ordered my horse, to ride away the irritation which my disappointment had occasioned. As I mounted, I caught a glance of Emily, standing at one of the windows, and looking at me with an expression, which I construed into a reproach for my hasty passion.

I spurred on my horse, however, and, followed by two servants, rode on towards Exeter, which lay at the distance of perhaps sixteen miles from Masterton House. Thither I often went, to gather news of the passing events; and I now took that road habitually. When riding or walking with Emily, no tortoise ever retarded its steps more than I was

willing to do ; but the moment I was alone, I instinctively put my horse upon his quickest paces, and in three-quarters of an hour I was more than half-way to Exeter.

I had galloped up one hill, and down another, all the way, with my thoughts in a state of very unreasonable confusion ; but about six miles from the city, the road dives down a steep declivity on one side of the valley, and, after taking two or three turns amongst the trees of Bewley Wood, rises abruptly up the opposite ascent. By the time I had reached this spot, my first impatience had evaporated, and I began the descent with somewhat more caution than I had hitherto thought necessary. The wind set towards me ; and, as I descended, I heard some voices singing a psalm in the wood below, no unusual occurrence in those days. The very puritanical howl with which the singers poured forth their canticle, turned me sick ; and preparing myself to encounter some of their hypocritical impertinence as I passed, I rode on, mentally giving all the fanatics in England to the devil, by the way. Before I had turned the corner of the wood, the psalm

had ceased, and I heard one untuneful throat admonishing another not to sing so loud.

“ Verily, Habacuc, if thou pourest forth the song of rejoicing so vehemently,” said the one, “ the prey over which thou rejoicest shall escape from thy hand. Art thou not bidden to do all things in season ?”

“ Yea, verily !” answered the other : “ but is it not written — ‘ Rejoice, for God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand ;’ and do I not, even now, hear his horse’s feet approaching ?”

As he spoke, I turned the corner of the wood ; and perceived, about fifty paces in advance, four men on horseback, with their backs towards me, and evidently watching for some one whom they expected to come from the opposite side. They were all clothed in stout buff coats, with large riding-boots, steeple hats, broad swords in their hands, and wide breeches of rough frieze ; and it was plain that they were either, — as they would themselves have called it, — “ bent upon spoiling the Egyptians, or leading some one away captive,” which, in those days of disorder, was often done without any law or authority whatsoever.

The moment my horse had turned the angle of the wood, the clearness with which they distinguished his footfalls, showed Master Habacuc that his ears had deceived him, and that the sounds he heard were coming from a different quarter to that from which he had at first supposed they proceeded. All the horsemen instantly wheeled round, and reconnoitred my party with very suspicious looks; doubtless feeling many godly yearnings towards the gold which they saw upon my cloak, and that which, they doubted not, was in my purse. But those were times when no man rode unprepared: my two servants were armed up to the teeth, and I had my sword by my side, and my pistols at my saddle-bow; so that—what with the superiority of our horses, and the better spirit in our hearts—we were more than a match for any four fanatics upon the earth. They made a movement, as they saw me putting my horse into a canter, to let me pass; and without any ceremony I dashed through the midst of them, splashing them with the dirt from the little muddy river that there crossed the road.

No notice was taken of a rudeness, which

I cannot but confess was somewhat intentional ; but as I passed I remarked, that one of the party was much better mounted than the rest, and wore his hair long, though not absolutely in the floating fashion of the Cavaliers. His face I did not particularly notice in the rapidity of my course ; and in a moment I had again turned the wood, and was ascending the opposite hill.

For half a mile farther I encountered nobody on the road, but a country girl with a basket of eggs ; and I began to think that my fanatics in the valley would be disappointed of their prey, when I saw at some distance, two horsemen coming quickly on, at a sharp trot, and seemingly deeply engaged in conversation. I perceived, as they approached, that they were both considerably advanced in life, and dressed very plainly, the one in black, the other in a dull brown. The first was extremely dark in complexion. His hair and beard were as black as jet ; and in person he was thin and bony, showing not a vestige of the red hue of health in his face. The other was far more florid, not corpulent

but stout, with mustachios, but no beard, while flowing from under his hat was a thing which, in those days, I had never seen ; but which I afterwards found to be a mass of false hair, called a periwig. The strangers looked up as they passed ; and the second fixed his eyes upon me for a moment, somewhat intently, then resumed his conversation with the other, and rode on.

I, too, suffered them to pass, doubting whether they could be the persons for whom the psalm-singers had been waiting in the valley, and endeavouring to determine if it would or would not be right to warn them of the danger. After a moment's thought, however, I drew up my horse, and galloped after them. The sound of his feet instantly made them stop. " I am afraid, gentlemen," said I, " that you may think me somewhat impertinent in thus detaining you ; but I cannot let you pass without giving you a piece of information which may concern you. There may perhaps be danger before you."

" Sir, we consider your conduct politeness, not impertinence ; and though somewhat ac-

customed to dangers, we rather differ from my good friend, Monsieur de Marville, who, when he first saw a Salmi de Bécasse in the second course, declared that he loved to be taken by surprise."

Such was the reply of the more florid horseman; the darker one said not a word: and I proceeded to inform them of what I had seen and heard in the valley. The effect which my tidings produced on the countenance of each, at once showed me that they were by no means indifferent to the psalm-singing in the wood. In truth I never saw perplexity more completely displayed in the faces of any men, than it was in those of my two new companions. They looked at one another and at me for a moment or two in silence; and then the one who had spoken exclaimed, "If we go back to Exeter, we are taken to a certainty!"

"If we go forward," replied the other, "we are but two men, nearly unarmed, against four well-armed ones: yet we had better risk it."

"Oh, certainly," said the first, at once resuming the light air with which he had been speaking before. "We have both risked

somewhat more in our day, and therefore let us onward. Young gentleman, we thank you for your courtesy ; but we must even go on to try how near akin these same fanatics are to ostriches, and whether they can digest cold iron."

"If the affair be likely to come to such arbitrament," answered I, "by your good leave, gentlemen, I will join myself to your party. Here are my two servants as stout knaves as ever mounted a horse, and well armed. Five men may perchance overawe these blackbirds of the wood ; and, at all events, if they do not prevent strife, they will spare bloodshed, by bringing it sooner to an end."

"I thank you sincerely, Sir," replied the stranger in black ; "I have myself abandoned the trade of shedding blood, and follow a milder calling ; yet those who force me to betake myself again to steel may have cause to rue the day they did so. I go now to seek the recovery of some property that was wrongfully taken from me ; and my friend, General St. Maur here, is kind enough, like you, to peril his own life to accompany me."

"Faith, there are few things, Du Tillet,

that I would sooner peril," replied the old gentleman, who had spoken first: "but let us proceed; and by the way this young gentleman may give us some knowledge of the politics of this neighbourhood."

To do so did not at all accord with my intentions; and therefore expressing both my unwillingness and my incapacity, I inquired what news of the King and the Parliament in London.

Of both the strangers could afford me plenty of intelligence,—some certain, some problematic; but I heard the whole tale of the King's surrender, and of the various manœuvres of the Army and the Parliament, as well as many a just, and too soon fulfilled prognostication of the fall of the monarchy, and the death of the monarch.

Such conversation soon brought us to the top of the hill; and, beckoning forward the lackeys, I bade them stand to their arms—an order they were very willing to obey, where the puritans were concerned; for, either from hatred to my brother's worthy attendant Gabriel Jones, or from some other more general

cause, a most universal detestation to all fanatics had spread itself throughout the dwellers in Masterton House.

We proceeded both slowly and cautiously on the descent into the wood below, for the psalm-singing had ceased ; and, as we never in those days attributed any thing like fair and open contest to the puritans, we doubted not that they had hid themselves among the trees to take our party by surprise. Much injustice in those respects did the cavaliers do the fanatics, who—to say sooth, now that the party mania has gone by which once blinded my eyes—fought on most occasions with a bold, steady, and determined courage, which might have graced a better cause. In the present instance also, we were completely deceived, for the moment we had turned the corner of the wood, we found the four godly worthies in their buff jerkins, planted in the same spot where I had left them. Each of my servants, as well as myself, had by this time pistol in hand ; and my two new companions, being without fire-arms, had drawn their swords, so that we presented a somewhat formidable body.

As such the fanatics seemed to consider us, for they made no movement to give us the encounter half way, as I had expected; and I could see heads brought close together, to confer in a whisper; probably in regard to the apparition of so many, when they had expected but two. Nevertheless, they remained drawn up across the road, and a moment after, their pistols also, were brought forth from their holsters, and it became evident that hard blows were to be the order of the day.

I had not for my own part the slightest unwillingness to bring the matter to such a decision; but yet, as they stood there motionless on the very path we were to take, I confess I would have much preferred to give spurs to my horse, and force my way through at full gallop, rather than quietly ride up, and enter the strife with calm premeditation. My two companions, however, chose the latter method of proceeding, and without hurrying our pace in the least, we approached slowly till we almost touched our opponents.

At that moment Monsieur du Tillet, as his friend had called him, fixing his eye sternly

upon the least fanatical in dress of the other party, whose appearance I have before described, exclaimed in a deep imperative voice, "Clear the way!" and pushed his horse forward towards him.

The other instinctively made a movement to obey, but instantly recovering himself, he replied, "Stop thou rather, man of Belial, and yield thyself to the servants of the Lord!"

At the same moment, he who had been called Habacuc, addressed himself to me, exclaiming, "What doest thou here, young man, consorting with the children of unrighteousness, and the priests of Baal,—the worshippers of the harlot who sitteth on the seven hills? Verily I say unto thee, thy father and thy father's house have been suffered too long in the land. Ye shall be cast out, root and branch, if ye separate not yourselves from the followers of the beast, who would bring the abomination of desolation to sit in the holy places of our Israel."

All this passed in a moment, and while the mouth of Habacuc was still filled with the harlot and the beast, I heard the stern voice of

Du Tillet repeat, "Clear the way! Walter Dixon, clear the way! or I will clear it for myself, as I have done of old, I tell thee!"

"And I tell thee thou shalt never see her more," replied the other, dropping at once his fanatical snuffle. "Take that to settle all!" and levelling the pistol he had in his hand towards Du Tillet's head, he fired. The ball whistled past my ear innocuous, and Walter Dixon, after a moment's pause to see the effect of his shot, drew his sword and urged his charger against his adversary. Their blades crossed, and at the end of two or three lightning-like passes, the pseudo-puritan was rolling in the dust, while his horse ran masterless up the hill.

At the same time Habacuc had spurred forward upon me; but we were both, I believe, unwilling to use the same deadly arms with which our companions were contending, and while he strove to grasp my collar and pull me off my horse, I struck him on the head with the butt-end of my pistol, a blow which drove in his steeple-crowned hat, and laid him on the ground beside his comrade. The other two buff jackets fled manfully from the gentleman

in the periwig aided by my two servants, one of whom could not refrain from firing a shot at the rotund nether man of a flying enemy, who escaped however unhurt ; while we on our part, without staying, Achilles-like, to spoil the fallen, rode forward at full speed, and were soon far from the scene of strife.

What to be done next, now became the question. I felt myself called upon by every principle of hospitality, to invite the two strangers to take shelter at Masterton House ; and the very particular inquiries which General St. Maur made concerning all the noblemen in the neighbourhood, but more especially my father, led me to imagine that such an invitation was expected. To ask any one to Lord Masterton's dwelling, however, without his command to that effect, was quite out of the question. I dared as well have struck my hand off ; and, obliged to refrain, I rode on with very hospitable feelings at my heart, but with manners, I am afraid, somewhat cold and disagreeable, from the restraint I was forced to put upon myself. Had my companions con-

tinued their route past the gates of the Park, I should have found myself still more embarrassed; but fortunately, at the first turning of the road, they relieved me from my difficulty, by thanking me for my warning and assistance, and bidding me farewell.

“We must forward, at full speed,” said General St. Maur; “and now all that we will ask of you, my young friend, is, that you will let one of your servants ride a hundred yards with us on this road, to puzzle our pursuers if they try to trace us by our horses’ footmarks. Your man can easily clear yon hedge, and cross that field, so as to join you on the other road.”

I consented willingly; and, with those contradictory feelings, which so frequently torment us in our passage through life, I gladly saw two men depart, in whom I was beginning to take a great interest, and of whom I would willingly have seen more.

My next consideration was, whether I should, or should not, tell my father the adventure I had met with at all; and I fancied I could see his calm, cold eye, while I related what had

happened, and the expression of total want of sympathy with the motives under which I had acted, which his countenance would assume as I narrated the occurrences of the morning.

I do not know what it is that stern men gain; but beyond a doubt, I had a thousand minds not to tell him a word, and let after-events take their chance; but reflecting that such conduct would be cowardly, I summoned resolution, and on my arrival walked directly to his library.

He was reading when I entered, and for a moment read on; but then, raising his eyes, he noticed me with an ominous "What is it, Sir?"

How I got through my story does not much matter, and I do not very well know; but from the pure fright of the narrator, it became a long one, comprising a thousand particulars, which might as well have been left out. My father did not help me in the least; but listened on, with the most imperturbable patience, and the most unmoved silence. Nevertheless, I got through it at length; and then stood before him, ready for martyrdom.

"Habacuc!" he said, when I had concluded,

“That must be Habacuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate—we shall soon hear more;” and he dropped his eyes to his book again.

Glad to be so easily relieved of my tale; I was quitting the room, when Lord Masterton again looked up, and there was an expression of greater energy in his countenance than I had heretofore seen. “Do not suppose, Harry,” he said, “that I blame you for what you have done; it may—and must—hurry on the necessity of measures, which I have for some days seen that I shall be obliged ultimately to take. Personally you acted well, and with spirit; although your interference in favour of two obscure royalists—for such must these two men be—will probably force me into a rupture with the fanatics sooner than I had intended. The Army hold the King like an eagle in a cage, whom they will teach to strike the game for them if they can; but if the royal bird prove refractory, they will wring off his head. All good men are arming in his favour; and doubtless a slight display of force in his behalf, may compel his enemies to grant him such terms as will become him to accept. My own oath is

registered against the service of an ungrateful King; but your brother and yourself shall be free to draw the sword in his defence, as soon as I have provided that your swords shall not want support. Now leave me."

I gladly obeyed, pleased and flattered by a degree of confidence which my father had never before evinced towards me. In the evening, a letter arrived from Habacuc Grimstone, which, as a party nearly concerned, Lord Masterton thought fit to show me, as well as his answer. The epistle of the fanatic magistrate was full of hypocritical insolence and unmannerly threats. He detailed my adventure of the morning, after his own fashion, and demanded that I should be sent to Exeter, to await in prison the sentence of God's saints upon me.

My father's reply was cool and politic. Doubting that Habacuc had any higher authority than his own, for the arrest of two fugitives, he merely answered, that he had already reprimanded his son for his juvenile frolic, of which he accused him; and he informed the puritan, that if he would send up to him, as the superior magistrate, the warrant from

the council of state for the arrest of the two persons, whose evasion from justice his son, he said, had favoured, he would be responsible for its due execution. Farther, he begged to inquire of Mr. Habacuc Grimstone, why he, a worthy and God-fearing man, had endeavoured to pull his son from horseback, by the collar, before his son had given him any provocation ; and he desired the magistrate to be ready to make his questions thereon, when he should answer his next monthly visitation to Exeter.

There being no force of any kind at Exeter at that time, the fanatic was fain, not only to keep quiet, but to make some sort of concessions, especially as we afterwards discovered that he had acted without any authority from the council of state. He took good care, however, to denounce my father as a malignant, against the effects of which denunciation Lord Masterton made preparations, which must be spoken of more fully.

CHAPTER IV.

No bustle, no clamour, no spurring here and there, announced to the world that Lord Masterton was preparing to take part in the general risings of the country, which the King's prolonged imprisonment and the increasing demands of the Parliament had occasioned. In the first instance, my brother's servant, the saintly Gabriel Jones, was despatched with what he and the whole of the rest of the family conceived to be a private letter to Lord Capel, concerning a junction of our forces with his. The epistle, however, was afterwards found amongst that nobleman's papers, and proved to be an earnest and positive request, that his Lordship would abstain from all military efforts in favour of the imprisoned King. Whether

Lord Capel had been prepared beforehand to receive it, and the whole business was merely a *ruse* to get the valet whom we all suspected of treachery, out of the way, without the risk which would have been incurred by discharging him, I do not know ; but at all events it answered that purpose ; and Gabriel, who was absent three times the number of days which was necessary for his journey, probably carried to the council of state, a letter which completely calmed them in regard to the proceedings of my father.

Every tenant on the estate was well known in regard to his principles ; and many of the farmer's sons had joined the royalist forces on former occasions. Several indeed had been made prisoners by the parliamentary troops, and only owed their deliverance from the terrible fate of being sold to slavery by their conquerors, to the influence of my father's name. Such as had served before, were appointed to drill as speedily as possible those who had not, in very small parties, choosing remote places in the woods, or on the sands ; while many a moonlight review on the lawns

near the house, completed the discipline of the troops we were raising, as far as discipline could be attained in our circumstances. Each farmer taught his horse to stand fire in his own stable ; and each kitchen over the whole estate became a practising hall for the broadsword.

Arms and accoutrements were not wanting ; but these, as well as our communications from other royalists in different parts of the country, were conveyed by sea. By the same means a considerable body of tenantry, from our family estates in Dorsetshire, were brought to Masterton House ; so that at the end of a month, besides the number necessary to keep the house during our absence, we could muster nearly five hundred men, ready to march, well armed and mounted, and far better disciplined than most of the cavalier regiments of the day.

My father still adhered to his determination of never drawing his sword for the monarch who had disgraced him. He would defend Masterton House, he said, to the last, if it were attacked ; but he would not march from its hearth for a King who neither deserved nor

desired his service. The regiment we had privately raised was called my brother's ; but one troop of a hundred men was especially entrusted to me by my father ; and, in our midnight reviews, I took a pride in rendering it more perfect and accurate in all the manœuvres than the rest. Indeed, although, in point of talent and skill, my brother was far better qualified to command than myself, there was many a young yeoman who would have willingly volunteered into Master Harry's troop, after its roll was full. One circumstance, however, surprised me not a little, which was, that my father insisted, I should reserve one saddle for Gabriel Jones, my brother's servant, whose natural place seemed near his master's person. This was afterwards explained to Frank in my hearing.

“ Your valet, Frank,” said Lord Masterton, in speaking on the subject, “ is, as you know, a most notorious villain. He was given to me by Fairfax, who—as honest a block of living stone as this world ever produced—thought that he was conferring a signal favour on my family, by introducing into it a fellow that

could exquisitely dress hair, tie a point, or cut a rose for a shoe, and yet could edify us all by the unction of his saintly doctrine. I know him for a spy ; and yet I send him with you, because, as you are going suddenly to a strange part of the world, where his means of communication will be cut off, he cannot do the harm he could here : yet I put him into Harry's troop, that he may have a watchful eye upon him in the field, and during the march, while you, Frank, can keep him always near you, at other times, in his capacity of valet."

Such an explanation from my father, who seldom gave an explanation of any thing he thought right to be done, was of course quite sufficient to satisfy me, and more than sufficient to satisfy my brother, who received his parent's commands with even more unquestioning obedience than myself.

All our arrangements, however, were nearly complete before Master Gabriel Jones thought fit to return, and had we not been forced to wait for news from Lord Norwich, and from Hales, who were actively preparing the insurrection of Kent, that worthy would have been obliged to

march within two days after his arrival. Even during the seven days that we were thus compelled to pause, he was watched so narrowly by all the household, that he only contrived to absent himself for a part of one day, which he spent in visiting Exeter. That city indeed was, for the time, no place of great safety for a puritan of any cast. The parliamentary committee which sat there for Devonshire, had been forced to betake themselves to Exmouth, and multitudes of people parading the streets, menaced with death every roundhead they met, shouting, "God and the King! God and the King!" before all the principal public buildings.

This news was brought by Gabriel himself; and a somewhat sudden and suspicious change made itself manifest in his political opinions from that moment; as he assured his master, that his heart was moved with compassion and sympathy, on hearing the poor suffering people so exclaim from their very bowels, to be restored to the ancient rule under which they had lived in peace and happiness.

Frank, however, was not a person to be taken in by sudden conversions; and he no-

ticed the present one to me, in his calm but bitter manner, which was always the more potent, because he seemed rather to repress than encourage the sneering turn of his lip, that accompanied involuntarily some even of his kindest speeches.

“ My knave Gabriel pities the King,” he remarked, “ almost as much as you do, Harry ; and he is enthusiastic too, as you are. Watch him well, therefore, on the road, like a good boy ; and as you will most likely understand each other’s characters, if you see any symptoms of his loving the King so well as to wish to see him at the Isle of Wight, or to consult for his safety with the Parliament in London, just send a pistol-ball through his head. Or if you be afraid, I will do it, with good will.”

To our surprise, however, Gabriel Jones shewed no unwillingness to accompany us on our expedition ; and having served in the army in former days, proved himself an active and ready trooper as any in the regiment.

At length the expected letter from Lord Norwich arrived, and it was determined to begin our march the same night. Then came the

most painful affair of all, the parting. The excitement and bustle of preparation, had hitherto covered over all that was to be apprehended in the expedition on which we were bound—all that was dark—all that was sorrowful. Hope, a goddess that previously lives in activity, had promised every thing fair and glorious, as the result of our expedition; but at the moment of parting, a thousand dim shadowy fears rose up between us and hope, like storm clouds rolling over the bright moon. Success, or death, or exile, were the only alternatives which the fortunes of those days afforded to such as mingled in the eager struggle of civil war. The block and the axe, the prison, the deadly platoon, were dooms for those who yielded; and as is ever the case in intestine strife, cruelty and revenge took the robe and sword which equity and justice had cast down in their flight. To us, who reflected, a thousand fearful spectres gibbered in the obscure vista of the future; and the gay unthinking mirth of the good yeomen who followed us, were envied by their more mental lords.

My brother and myself were quitting our

paternal hearth for the first time, and that for the purpose of sharing in the most bloody strife that ever disfigured our native land. The conviction, therefore, could not but arise in our bosoms, that youth's epoch of peace and happiness was past, and that, even at the best, all which now lay before us, was the turbulent struggle of manhood, and the decrepid feebleness of age. At the same time, a host of dangers, difficulties, cares, and disappointments—the brood of that shapeless monster Probability—barked at our heels, as we set out from the threshold of what had hitherto been our home.

From my father we parted almost in silence. A few stern words of injunction, counsel, and warning,—the sterner because they covered deeper and softer feelings,—were all that he ventured. From Emily, the parting was more painful still. My father sent us forth and shared our motives; but Emily could not comprehend why any man should leave home, and peace, and happiness, to risk the breaking of his dearest ties, to stake his life upon an uncertain cast, to peril fortune, hope, and the future,

to shed his own blood, and spill his fellow creature's.

She stood upon the steps of the door, while the servants held the horses and a torch. My brother took leave of her first, and simply shook hands with her. I thought that their relative situation and our near intimacy might have ventured more; but, of course, I could not exceed the measure of her promised husband's familiarity, and I too merely pressed her hand. I could see the tears streaming from her eyes by the red torch-light; and as my fingers closed thrilling upon hers, with a sensation that ran through my whole frame, I could see the blood mount up into her beautiful cheek, fade away again, like the sunshine withdrawn from an evening cloud, as the wind wafts it afar; and the next moment, she reeled and would have fallen, had she not caught the iron balustrade for support.

My brother was by this time on his horse; I sprang down the steps and followed. A little farther on was the regiment in marching order; the torch was extinguished, the word was

given, and in a few minutes we were winding along through the narrow dark avenue, with hearts somewhat sadder than we had expected the day before.

The conduct of the march had of course been given to my brother; and the plans of the approaching efforts in the King's favour, had been communicated to him as far as Lord Holland and Lord Norwich had thought prudent. I was not so far trusted, only knowing that we were to advance with all speed, to effect our junction with Goring and Hales in Kent; and if prevented from doing so, to fall back upon Wales, which had already raised the royal standard. In either case, a long and difficult march was before us, where dangers were innumerable, and difficulties immense. Activity, however, was every thing, for the whole hopes of Lord Norwich were founded on the reinforcements which had been promised him from different parts of the country, and of which our regiment formed a very considerable part.

To do my brother Frank but bare justice, never did the most experienced commander conduct his march with more skill and expedition

than marked our advance. His object was to avoid all encounters till he had joined Goring,* but nevertheless to cut through every obstacle till he had effected that junction ; and so well did he contrive his route, that for five days, we met with no opposition whatever. His means of information, arranged with that skill and clearness which he displayed in every thing and on all occasions, never left him without a complete knowledge of each hostile party that hovered about the country. Not a local magistrate moved, not a body of militia was ordered out, but he had early notice ; and at the same time, he took care that no tidings of any of our intended motions should reach the enemy, for neither soldier nor officer of the whole regiment knew, on beginning his day's march, where his halting-place would be at night.

At length, one morning, at the little village of Barford, where we had halted the evening before, we received information that a large body

* George Goring Lord Norwich, for a fuller account of whom, see Clarendon's Hist. vol. vi. pages 56, 58, &c. Ed. 1826.

of the parliamentary troops had arrived the day before at Salisbury ; and, as we were just about to march, we learned that in expectation of our advance, Hornsby, who commanded them, had taken up a position on the other side of the Wily bourne, which runs between Fisherton and Wilton. The number of the enemy was said to be two thousand ; and, making all allowance for exaggeration, this was deemed by far too superior a force to encounter if it could be avoided. Striking off, therefore, to the left, we made a movement upon Amesbury ; and, advancing as rapidly as possible, soon reached a spot where the high road winding round a hill passed along the side of the ascent, leaving a deep wooded hollow below, with a wide plain beyond, which was again broken by a Roman camp and various ancient tumuli. On the right hand of the hill lay the line of another road, old, steep, and narrow ; and which appeared to have been disused in favour of the better path on the left ; but as this seemed the most private and concealed, Frank determined upon following it, till we had passed the dangerous part of our march.

This resolution, however, was shaken, as he

and I advanced a little before the head of the regiment, by seeing a horseman riding slowly on before us. We instantly paused to remark him, and a moment after we saw him halt, dismount, advance towards an angle of the road, and while his horse, seemingly taught to such manœuvres, stood stock still, he pressed himself close up against the bank, and appeared to examine cautiously the country beyond the turn of the hill.

A moment satisfied him, and returning as quietly as he had advanced, he mounted his charger, and putting him on the turf at the side, rode speedily back. The sight of my brother and myself, however, with the head of the regiment, which was now beginning to appear behind us, seemed to startle him ; and he again drew in his rein ; but immediately after spurred forward as if to accost us.

Every step that he took in advance, his figure became more familiar to my memory. For an instant, indeed, I could not tell where I had seen him, but before he was close up with us, I had just time to say, " Have a care, Frank ! have a care ! This is that Walter Dixon, whom

I found consorting with the fanatics in Bewly Wood."

It was indeed the same person. He was paler than when I before saw him; and the sleeve of his coat, which was no longer of buff, but of good morone cloth, was cut up at the back, and tied with black ribbons, as if to give space for the dressing of a wound. He seemed to have full use of his arm, however, and apparently suffered little inconvenience from the injury he had formerly received.

"Halt your troop, gentlemen! For God's sake halt your troop, if ye be friends of King Charles," he exclaimed as he came near. "The right of Hornsby's cavalry is resting on the little wood at the end of that road; and if ye advance, ye are cut to pieces."

Frank eyed him from head to foot with no very cordial glance. "You seem mightily afraid of fanatics, good Sir," he replied, "considering the society in which my brother last had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Without your brother could know, Sir," replied the other, with perfect calmness, "what were my motives for concerting with fanatics for

the time, neither he nor you can judge whether I have reason to fear them or not. However, there is no room now for wasting words. We shall have reconnoitring parties on us soon. If you come minded to give Hornsby battle, on! You will find him straight before you. But if ye be sane men, and with your handful here, would avoid an encounter with an enemy that more than trebles your numbers, follow me down into the valley."

"Hold, Sir," replied my brother, "this matter is not so easily settled. You are either a friend or an enemy. If the former, you shall have my thanks, when I have proved you. If the latter, you are a spy, and seek to deceive us; and the meed of such conduct is death. Take four troopers, Harry, ride down with this fair gentleman on the road he proposes to lead us. If you find all clear, send back one of the men to me. I will wait under the hill. If you find he betrays you, send a ball through his head, and ride back with all speed."

"You use scanty ceremony, Sir," replied Walter Dixon, with a frown.

"I have no time to be polite, Sir," answered

Frank ; “ but doubtless my brother, who is of a more courtly nature, if he find you false, will make you a bow when he blows your brains out.”

“ Well, it matters not !” replied the other ; “ it is not you I serve.” A few words more of such altercation ensued, but our new companion was fain to obey ; and, accompanied by myself and four of my troop, he rode down a narrow path into a wood that skirted the bottom of the hill.

“ Why not take the road over the plain ?” demanded I, as we proceeded. “ This would be a sweet spot for cavalry to be attacked. Jump down and beat yon bushes, William Fells.”

The stranger smiled :—“ Do not be so suspicious, young gentleman,” he said. “ When last I met you, I had my own purposes to answer, in consorting with Habacuc Grimstone and his companions. It might be interest, it might be safety, it might be revenge, that made me use them ; but I have no such motives now. I do not take the road over the plain, because I know every inch of this county : and I am sure, from that knowledge, that Hornsby’s troopers

on the elbow of the hill could see a curlew fly from any one barrow to the other, far more a regiment of cavalry, wearing King Charles's colours. Now, if you remark, this belt of wood would cover the march of two thousand men, till opening out safe yonder, on the Amesbury road, far out of sight of the enemy, it leaves Hornsby and his roundheads in the rear, watching till night fall, for what will never come. Do you see my reason now?"

What he said was plausible; and I remembered his exclamation when about to fire at Du Tillet, — "Thou shalt never see her more," which certainly corroborated the idea that some personal motive, very distinct from political party, had united him for the time with the puritans. I was resolved to trust to nothing but my own eyes, however; and accordingly proceeded onward, till we regained the high road, where I could see for more than a mile, on every side, without the possibility of ambush. I then confessed myself satisfied; and thanking the stranger for his courtesy, dispatched a trooper to inform my brother of the result.

“ I suppose, then, that now, you have no objection to my proceeding on my way ?” demanded my companion, “ for with four armed men round me, of course I must obey their commands.”

I acknowledge, his question embarrassed me not a little ; for, after the proof he had just given of his sincerity, to doubt him farther was an insult ; and yet, I could not entirely divest my mind of a suspicion, that he might have some latent motive in his desire to proceed, to which it might be detrimental for us to yield.

He remarked the thoughtful pause which these feelings occasioned, with a smile,—“ Well, well,” said he, “ if you have no authority to release me, it matters little. My business is not so urgent as that it may not tarry for half an hour ; and now I bethink me, for guiding you thus safely, I shall ask leave to travel under your escort for some short way.”

Of all sorts of hypocrisy—and God knows there is a lamentable number in this world—the affectation of frankness is the surest birdlime for a green youth. Prepossessed as I was against Master Walter Dixon, the easy bold-

ness of his manner, supported as it appeared by one instance of evident good service, went far to do away all prejudices ; and after assuring him, on my own responsibility, that he would be free to accompany or to quit us, I remained in conversation with him, till my brother and the rest of our force came up.

During that pause he turned the conversation himself to our former rencontre. “ Although I can hardly speak of it with patience,” he said, “ for your interference cut me off from my only chance of revenging a base injury, yet I think it worth while to explain how I — who was never a puritan or a parliamentarian, even before that party’s late barefaced rejection of all decency — how I came to make use of my good cousin Habacuc Grimstone for the arrest of that villain whose name shall not embitter my lips. That old man with whom you were consorting,” he continued, “ who, God knows, should long ago have done with such toys, must needs, some five years since, become my rival with a young lady promised to me by every vow, but that of marriage, which can bind woman to man. He injured me deeply, and I

vowed revenge, nor have I ever forgotten that vow. He stepped in between me and what should have been mine, and I resolved that he should pay dearly for so doing. Years have passed over and he was long a sojourner in another land, but I did not forget my vow, even while his steps were afar; and he was well watched for me, when I could not watch him myself. But here come the troopers—I have only farther to say, that I heard of his landing in England, marked my occasion, but found him accompanied by another.—I then joined with Habacuc, to take him as a malignant, a catholic, and a traitor.—I heeded not who knows it—my desire was revenge, however obtained. I hoped indeed, that my own arm might deal the blow—but even if I failed or fell, I thought myself sure that he would suffer—when your cursed interference saved him, and nearly ruined me; for the royalist papers found on my person during my sickness from the wound I then received, caused me to be denounced as a bitter malignant, and my escape is next to a miracle.”

He spoke quickly, to conclude his story, be-

fore the arrival of my brother, who was now coming rapidly up, at the head of the regiment. This tale, however, brief as it was, greatly changed my opinion of my momentary acquaintance Du Tillet, and I would fain have had Frank say something to do away the rude suspicion which we had both manifested towards our new comrade. But my brother, whether from shyness, or what other cause, I know not, while he could give a command with clearness and force, or reason on a proposition at length, or point a reply with the most bitter sarcasm, could never bring himself to ask a favour or offer a compliment, or even express a kindly feeling, with graceful ease. I have indeed seen moments which I shall have to notice more hereafter, when the emotions of his heart overcame reserve, and burst forth with splendid energy; but without they were excited to a high pitch, they seemed rather to embarrass than to support him; and I heard him once say, that his head could always take care of itself, but his heart was the greatest bungler he ever met with.

On the present occasion he found that he

had done the stranger some wrong, and would willingly have offered an apology ; but what he said was lame and impotent enough.

“ Mention it not ! mention it not ! ” said Walter Dixon, who seemed to have talked himself into good humour. “ If you carried caution almost into folly, the loss had nearly been your own.”

His request was then made that he might be permitted to take advantage of the march of our cavalry, which was readily granted,—my brother, nevertheless, taking the precaution to ask how far we were to be honoured with his company.

“ Not very far, in faith,” replied Walter Dixon. “ We shall part probably at Basingstoke ; for I cut across the country by Milford and Horsham into Kent, and you are bound for Essex, I hear.”

Frank, with his usual caution, replied nothing ; and inwardly resolving to take advantage of the stranger’s knowledge of the country as far as possible, left him still in perfect ignorance of his route.

Walter Dixon, however, gained upon my

brother's esteem. There was a ready boldness in his demeanour, that soon put Frank at his ease; and a somewhat rude method of opposing every thing that was said to him, which soon involved him in a logical dispute with my brother, and left them the best friends in the world. To say the truth, I began to esteem more than to like him; for his bluntness was sometimes rather offensive. He would scoff at things that all sects held sacred, and with a sort of keen and cutting rapidity, seemed to go direct to the point of his argument, without any reverence to prejudices or feelings. Nevertheless, to make up, though few propositions met his assent, and though he had a most merciless disregard for the opinion of others, he generally contrived to leave you tolerably well satisfied with yourself, by extolling those virtues or talents of which you fancied yourself possessed.

Whether this was casual or intentional, I know not; but I soon remarked, that one range of human qualities formed the subject of his praise to my brother, and another to myself, though Heaven knows we neither of us

could say he flattered us. Thus he proceeded for several days, growing upon our regard. At Basingstoke, Master Dixon appeared somewhat surprised when he learned our intention of following (for some part of the way at least) the same road with himself; assured my brother that he was very wrong in leading his troops into Kent; and declared that, to the best of his judgment, the only stand which the royalists could hope to make successfully would be in Essex. Nevertheless he sneered at men who could be changed by every breath of opinion, and laughed at the shrewdness with which Frank had deceived him in regard to the direction of his march, observing, "I am not so easily gulled, in general."

We met with no opposition on our march, after leaving Amesbury, till we reached an open common near East Grinstead, where we encountered a large party of militia, drawn up on a rise, with rather a formidable aspect. It was the *coup d'essai* of almost every person present; and I cannot but confess that, without the slightest fear, my heart beat both quick and hard, as my eye ran over the bristling line

of pikes, which bade fair to wait our charge with all the patience in the world. After a few sentences of encouragement, my brother gave the word, and on we went against them at full speed; but it so happened that the militiamen were a great deal more raw and inexperienced than ourselves. They waited with white faces, and jostling shoulders, till we came within about twenty paces of their line; then throwing down their pikes to a man, they took to their heels; and, in a body, dashed over a hedge and ditch, near which they had been placed with a view to guard their flank. Only one man was killed, and only one wounded on the occasion. The first was an unfortunate parliamentarian, who seemed rooted to the spot with surprise, when he recognised Master Dixon, who charged by my side at the head of the troop.

I could just hear that he was pouring forth an objurgation in which the words, "Master Dixon! Master Dixon!" were predominant, ere he prepared to run with his fellows; but the person he addressed, made his horse bound forward three or four yards before the regi-

ment, and exclaiming, "Take that to stop your babbling," dealt him a blow which bit many an inch into his skull.

The only person wounded was my brother ; the fleshy part of whose arm was slightly injured by a pistol ball, which the commander of the militia thought himself bound to discharge, before he headed his men in the rapid evolution with which they cleared the hedge, and dispersed over the country.

For fear of the reunion of our flying enemy, and their junction with other bodies of the parliamentary troops, which we heard of in the neighbourhood of East Grinstead, we marched on for nearly sixteen miles farther, towards Lamberhurst, where Master Dixon assured us we might halt in security. As the horses were tired, however, we determined to pause at a little sequestered village on the way, which offered a picture of peace and tranquillity, unspeakably refreshing after the toils, anxieties, and cares of a long and difficult march, through a country wasted with civil war, and replete with strife.

CHAPTER V.

THE scene in which we halted was peculiarly English ; many lands and many beautiful spots have I visited since, without seeing any thing in the least like it, and yet it is difficult to tell wherein the particular distinction lay.

Winding down the slope of an easy hill, the smooth, broad road opened out upon a village green, with its large glistening pond shaded by tall elms, several clumps of which were scattered round. Forty or fifty neat cottages surrounded the green ; and a long row of plain white houses went skirting down by the side of the road as it pursued its onward way into the country beyond. On the left hand, as we descended, rose the spire of the church from a group of immemorial trees, whose rounded

masses broke beautifully the somewhat heavy architecture of the body of the building; and, about half a mile distant, on the right, in the full light of the evening sun, appeared a large and lordly dwelling, surrounded by the deep woods, which crowned a wide sloping lawn, only separated from the village by a thick brick wall. Farther still, beyond, through an opening left between the trees and the hill, rose a high rocky piece of ground, covered by the grey ruins of an old feudal castle; and there seemed, to the eye of fancy, a moral propriety in the arrangement of the whole scene, that enhanced its beauty. The cottages gathered round the foot of the more wealthy dwelling—that dwelling itself rising out of the midst of them—the house of prayer standing near at hand; and far beyond the grey and crumbling fragments of feudal tyranny, commenting on the change of days, and monumenting the evils of the past. The whole had a vague reference to the state of society which existed before the civil war broke out, and perhaps the image was the more pleasing to me from its very indistinctness.

Probably the difference between the aspect of England and that of every other land, may consist more in the appearance of contented industry, than in any thing else—and that industry evinced, not in the actual exertions one witnesses, but in their results. The neatness of the cottage, however lowly, the pains bestowed to render it clean, the ornamental plants, however simple, which are taught to give a grace to the humblest dwelling, and a thousand other things which bespeak habitual activity and care, all breathe the spirit of willing, healthful, happy exertion, betokening that best of intellectual gifts—contentment,—that sweet calm sunshine of existence, compared with which, the brightest wit is but a flash, the purest of ambitions but a dream indeed. No, no! there is but one ambition that is worth a hope, and it lies beyond the grave.

The whole scene spoke comfort and repose. It was so calm it might have been almost sad, had not half a dozen merry voices risen up and mingled not unmelodious with the notes of the blackbird pouring from the trees on the hill.

As we came down, all the villagers were

turned out to see us approach ; and the fearlessness with which they did so, confirmed what the appearance of the place had before announced, that its remote and sequestered situation had sheltered it completely from the storm of civil war. We were welcomed gladly, for we found that the population were loyalists at heart ; and, retiring into the little public house, my brother and myself proceeded to allot our men to the different villagers and farmers, who, as we had no tents, undertook readily to house our troopers in barns and lofts, and to receive the officers in their own dwellings.

We here, for the first time, heard news of Lord Norwich, who was, it appeared, within twenty miles of us ; but Walter Dixon, who was now about to leave us, brought in a peasant who had seen the parliamentary force under Major General Skippon, partially interposed between us and the cavaliers. At first, Dixon strongly counselled my brother to make a bold push, and try to cut his way through Skippon's corps ; but afterwards changed his opinion, on learning that the parliamentary force amounted to near five thousand men : and agreed with

Frank and the other officers, that it would be better to communicate with Lord Norwich or Hales, previous to taking any rash step, especially as by forced marches we had arrived at least three days before we could be expected. As soon as this was settled, Dixon took leave of us, with many a profession of regard ; promising at the same time, if he could obtain any intelligence as he passed towards Canterbury, to make every effort to send it to us ; and whenever he had concluded the business on which he went, to return and join us with what men he might be able to collect.

The next proceeding was—much against his own liking—to cut the hair of my servant, William Fells, to clothe him in a plain suit of grey, and to despatch him to find out Lord Norwich. Though a resolute fellow, and as shrewd as the north wind, we did not trust him with any written communication ; but merely charged him to tell the General of our arrival, and to bring us farther orders with all speed. He did not depart however forthwith ; and so great a change had the sanctification of his apparel wrought on my man, that I hardly

knew him when, after a few minutes' absence, he came up to me, as I was standing alone, and begged to speak with me for a moment.

“ So please you, Sir,” said he, after some circumlocutions, “ far be it from me to speak ill of my fellow-servants—far less my fellow-soldiers ; but I cannot help hoping your honour will look after Master Gabriel Jones. There is no harm, I dare say, in Master Walter Dixon either ; but he and Jones have had a full hour's talk every night since first he joined us ; and they had a short one too before Master Dixon went this evening. I know of no evil, certainly ; but, perchance your honour may look to the matter. I did not like to speak to the Colonel, for he is so stern like ; neither, indeed, was it my place : but your honour being Captain of the troop—”

All servants have—I have remarked—a wonderful pleasure in revealing useful information, when it is too late ; though they take care to conceal every thing they see amiss while their information can be of any service to their masters. I was, therefore, obliged to take the tidings William Fells gave me, without grum-

bling, though he had been silent till Walter Dixon's departure rendered them of no great value.

“ Well, well ! William, I will look to it,” I replied ; and accordingly, as the only means of turning the information I had received to any account, before the day was half an hour older I called Master Gabriel to me, and asked him suddenly the nature of his conversation that evening with our late companion. I thought I could distinguish, at first, a certain rosy hue springing up in that worthy's cheeks, unlike their usual sallow tint, and rather indicative of detection ! but, whether he had any thing to conceal or not, Gabriel Jones was never at fault for a lie ; and looking up in a moment with a placid expression of benign satisfaction, he replied :—

“ I was giving him the receipt for the salve, Sir—praised be God, that made me the humble instrument of helping a fellow-creature ; and, moreover, one who, though once a bitter malignant, is now disposed worthily to restore the monarchy upon a reasonable and restricted basis, like your honour and other well-disposed persons. I could say something upon

that score, if your honour were inclined to listen — something touching the kingdom of Christ. I could pour forth manna and fatness,—salve—not alone such as that which heals the wounds of the flesh, like that which nightly I applied to the shoulder of sweet Walter Dixon; but salve that cures the bruised spirit. I could,—yea, verily, I could—”

“ Stop, stop ! good Gabriel,” interrupted I, “ pour it not forth upon me ; for, at present, neither is my spirit bruised, nor is my stomach disposed for manna or fatness ; but rather follow to the public-house, since all things are prepared to guard against surprise, and serve your master, who is there, probably waiting for his dinner, with as keen an appetite as I have.”

Gabriel ventured no reply ; but, casting up his eyes with that mingled look of pitying contempt and self-righteous sorrow, which is ever the refuge of the fanatic and hypocrite when he cannot or dare not answer, he followed to the house of general entertainment, and prepared to do the office of carver, which had been imposed upon him since we left Masterton House, partly from the scantiness

of unemployed attendants — partly to keep the worthy valet's talents for intrigue out of mischief by sufficient occupation. On the present occasion, however, before the table was cumbered with the *pabulum* whereon to exercise his arm, a strange servant appeared in rich but tasteful livery, craving, with soft and well-tutored inflections, to speak with Colonel Masterton, if such were the name of the officer commanding his Majesty's loyal regiment of cavalry, then at Penford-bourne. When brought to my brother, and bade to deliver his message, he informed him that the Lady Eleanor Fleming, the lady of the manor, having notice that the two sons of Lord Masterton were then in the village, leading a regiment of cavalry to reinforce Lord Goring, she prayed them, for kindness and courtesy's sake, to use her house as their home, during the time of their stay, and to command her means in any way which might prove useful to the cause in which they were engaged.

So polite a message required a polite reply ; and my brother begged the messenger to inform his lady, that, as soon as possible, either

his brother or himself would wait upon her, to thank her personally for her courteous attention. He pointed out, however, that some time must necessarily be spent in the quartering his troops, and guarding against all dangers during the night ; and he enlarged upon the difficulties of his office so pointedly, that I very well divined he intended to put on me the task of complimenting the lady of the house in his name.

Against this, however, I determined resolutely to set my face ; not that I shared in the least Frank's constitutional shyness, for at that time of my being, full of youth and health and fearlessness, I do not think I should have minded presenting myself to angel or fiend, or should have felt more awed by the one than scared by the other. But as far as my brother's character had hitherto been called forth, I knew it well ; and the moment that, as I expected, he began to hint, after the servant's departure, that it would be better for me to go ; I burst into a laugh, and positively refused. Perceiving clearly that I had anticipated his design, he laughed himself ; but persisted in

trying by every means to induce me to undertake the task, using the authoritative tone of elder brother—of heir apparent—and of commanding officer—coaxing and threatening by turns; but all in vain. I was resolute in my disobedience; and at length, obliged to master his shyness, he set out on foot, insisting at least that I should accompany him, to which I very readily assented.

We were soon in the avenue leading to the house. The long broad gravel walk along which we bent our steps, was by this time chequered by the moonbeams, and a single bright star was seen in the clear blue sky following the earth's bright partner, like an attendant. A solitary nightingale too pealed its many-melodied voice out of the woods hard by, and every lapse of its sweet song seemed designed to make the notes that followed sound sweeter still, by the dull silence of the momentary pause. It was then the height of the month of June, and there was a languid softness in the air that seemed to unknit the limbs, and even, touching the mind as well as the body, to soften every vigorous resolution of the soul.

It was one of those sweet but enervating evenings when a man feels that he could refuse nothing if asked by beautiful lips and a tuneful voice — nothing on earth ! My brother felt it as well as I ; but he would not own it, and laughed at the wild nonsense that I talked as we walked along.

“ Well, Harry,” said he, on approaching the house, “ if the air has such power of love in its soft breath, and if your heart be so very tender, you will here have a fine opportunity of falling in love—an experiment which every young cavalier of course desires to make. The widowed mistress of this mansion, they tell me, is fair ; and doubtless forty, according to the old alliteration · and marry ! but it would be a suitable match for a mad youth of eighteen ! Say, does the spirit move thee that way ? as Gabriel Jones would phrase it ; or would you rather still preserve your liberty, and gambol through all the mazes of your wild youthfulness, like that hare upon the lawn ? See how she doubles along the dewy grass, and now sits up in the moonlight, listening to hear what mad mortals are giving a voice to this still

grove. 'Tis I, mistress puss, who never yet loved any thing on earth; and my poor brother, whose touchwood heart would be kindled into a flame by the lustre of any young wench's black eye, from the Scottish border to Beachy Head. Now own, Harry Masterton, that a strain of music from yon open window, where you see the light, would complete your ecstasy, and render you perfectly fatuous."

As he spoke—whether he had caught the first preluding tones or not, I do not know—but as he spoke, the sounds of a lute came floating upon the air; and in a moment after, a fine melodious voice was heard singing, though the words escaped us. Some of the notes too were lost in the distance, or heard so indistinctly, that they formed but a low connecting murmur of sweet sounds, joining, as it were, the silence to the song; but still we could catch the rise and fall of the air, and every now and then the clear mellow swell of the singer's voice poured the tide of music full upon our ear, and certainly did complete the magic of the season, and the hour, and the scene.

Frank paused to listen; for no man was more

susceptible to the influence of music than himself; and I have sometimes been tempted to believe, that the internal conviction of being over susceptible to every thing, was the latent cause of the reserve and indifference that he assumed on subjects which I knew to be connected deeply with the most powerful feelings of his heart.

“She sings divinely,” said he, after listening a moment. “Come, Harry, let us see this syren:” and, with a bold effort he walked up to the door of the house, and entered a hall, in which a large party of servants were gathered together. All were instantly on their feet to do us reverence; and our names being given, we were led with a certain degree of ostentation, which might originate in either the lackey or his mistress, through several splendid rooms, in which were a number of fine paintings; but at length the door of a large chamber, filled with a multitude of odoriferous plants, was thrown open, and we saw before us the lady of the mansion.

The lamps in the room were so disposed as to shed a general light over its whole extent, suf-

ficient for every ordinary purpose, but faint and delicate, like the perfume of the plants with which it was mingled. Under its soft influence, —though placed at one of the farther windows, which the beams of the planet gleamed past, but did not enter—with a lute resting on the floor beside her, and supporting her left hand, which hung languidly by her side—sat a lady, the easy line of whose half-reclining figure, as she gazed forth upon the moon, might have vied with the choicest efforts of art. Yet the attitude was so perfectly natural, so mingled of grace and simplicity, that it was only like that of a lovely child in one of its moments of transient repose. The sound of our steps roused her from her reverie; and rising gracefully, she dropped the head of the lute against the pile of cushions on which she had been sitting, and advanced a few steps to meet us.

Never, certainly, did I behold a more beautiful creature than she who stood before us at that moment. What she might have been a few years earlier, I know not; but I can hardly suppose she was so lovely as she then appeared, though with her the first budding charm

of girlhood was gone. She was still, it is true, in the spring of life, and had never known an hour of that withering autumn which strips us of our green freshness ; but it was the spring verging into the summer. She had perhaps counted eight-and-twenty years ; but it seemed as if those years had been the handmaids to her beauty, and each had added some new grace. Tall, and probably, as a girl, very slim, she had now acquired a rounded fulness in every limb, which painters, I believe, call contour. There was nought of heaviness about it ; all the graceful delicacy of form remained : —the small foot and ankle ; the soft, slender wrist, and taper fingers ; the waist of scarce a span ; while the rest of the figure swelled with an easy line of exquisite symmetry into the full beauty of maturity. Her features were small and regular ; cut in the most exact proportion, yet soft ; though so clearly defined and exquisitely modelled, that on the straight nose and arching upper lip one might have fancied traces of some sculptor's chisel, before the madness of passion had wished the lovely statue

into life. The eyes were deep, deep blue ; but the length of the dark eyelashes by which they were shaded, made them appear almost black. They were of that kind which seem cold and freezing till lighted by some ardent passion, and then shine forth all fire and soul. Hers however, never, that I saw, bore that look of coldness ; while her lips seemed formed to express joy ; and in an hour, I have beheld a hundred different shades of pleased expression hang sporting on their ruby arch--from the soft, almost pensive smile, which took its tone from the pure colour of her eyes, to the gay laugh whose merry music rang gladdening to the very heart.

Her dress exposed more of her figure than I was accustomed to see displayed, and it struck me strangely, as if something had been forgot--but who could regard her dress, when she herself was there ?

With ease and courtesy, she advanced to meet us ; and giving her hand to my brother, bade him welcome. As she did so, she fixed her eyes upon his fine features and broad splen-

did brow ; and there seemed something that struck her much in his aspect, for her gaze was succeeded by a deep crimson blush, and a momentary embarrassment, which added to that under which he himself laboured.

It passed away, however, in an instant : and turning to me, she welcomed me also to her house, declaring how delighted she was to see us ; how high were her hopes that the cause of royalty might triumph, supported as it now was by all that was noble and gallant in the nation ; and how sincerely she prayed that she might have our society for some days longer.

My brother replied briefly ; but his eyes seemed from the first to have caught fire from hers ; and never did I behold such admiration in his looks before. Something in the presence of that lovely woman appeared to have called forth the energies that slumbered in his bosom ; and while the desire of pleasing prompted the endeavour to please, the degree of timidity which her manner towards him evinced, gave him that confidence which was all that his own demeanour ever wanted. All that he said

too, during the course of the evenign, was as clear, distinct, and well expressed, as if it had been composed beforehand ; and while he spoke, she seemed to drink in the tones of his voice with an eager attention, which offered a honied flattery that no language could have rendered sweeter. What she had expected to meet with, I do not well know ; whether she had thought to see in Colonel Masterton some swaggering cavalier or raw soldier, full of great oaths and strange excesses, or had pictured to herself one of those mere machines of war, which have no more business in a saloon than a cannon — but at all events, it was evident that she was surprised, and that the nature of her surprise was no way disagreeable. From it she soon recovered, however, and resumed that easy tone of high and finished breeding, which was habitual to her. Not that that tone—which generalizes all common minds—had deprived her demeanour of the peculiar and distinctive character which strong feeling or strong intellect preserves under any education.

In her manners there was a softness, an ease,

and a kindness, which I defy reserve or shyness, however rooted, to have resisted ; and her conversation was so varied—at times so gay, without being noisy, and at others so feeling, without being sad, that whatever was the character of her hearer's mind, whatever was his mood at the moment, he could not help finding something in harmony with his own sensations, something to touch, to interest, or to amuse. She was indeed a syren, as Frank had called her ; and though something that I did not well understand guarded my heart against her witchery, I sat by amused, and watched how she removed one shade of reserve after another from my brother's mind, and taught it to shine out, with all its powers heightened and refined by new feelings, which neither he nor I dreamed could so soon take possession of his heart.

She, I doubt not, with woman's intuitive perception, at once saw and knew the deep and powerful passions which that heart concealed ; and felt her own capability to rouse them into action. I believe, too, that she proposed at first, but to trifle with him as she had trifled with many before ; and to win for her vanity,

that most grateful of all flattery to woman, the excited love of a strong and vigorous mind. But women often deceive themselves in regard to their own strength, while they calculate on the weakness of others; and striving alone to make a slave, often give themselves a master. Lady Eleanor Fleming had met with many men in the world handsomer, gayer, brighter, than Frank Masterton; had brought them to her feet, and laughed their passions to scorn; or coldly pretended she had not seen their growing love. But she had never met one like my brother. There was a depth, a strength, a sternness in his nature, that could not be moved without effect, that must act powerfully whenever it did act; and, though she put forth all her charms, and habitually entered upon the game she had taught herself to play, she seemed to feel before long, that she had staked upon its issue what she had never for a moment risked before—her own heart.

After we had sat for a short time, wearing away the moments in conversation, that imperceptibly threw down all the barriers of formal reserve which the shortness of our ac-

quaintance had left, she rose, and giving Frank her hand, "You must eat with me, and drink with me, Colonel Masterton," she said, "and then I will suffer you to wear off the weariness of your long march in repose. Your chambers are prepared, and—Nay, I will take no refusal," she added, seeing my brother about to decline her proffered hospitality. "Did you think you could enter my house without becoming a prisoner?"

"A captive, I am afraid," replied my brother in an under-tone. But she proceeded without noticing the little gallantry of the speech.

"No, no, sir! Here are your head-quarters. There is plenty of room in this house for all your immediate followers; and till you go, you are my guest. When the day comes that calls you to the field, I will see you depart, and speed you with my prayers; and should chance bring you back, crowned with victory, to the dwelling of poor Ellen Fleming, I will weep my joy for—for—for the triumph of loyalty and honour. And now to supper, gentlemen. I know not why that meal, which seems to close

our day of active existence, should be the gayest of all our meetings."

"Perhaps," replied Frank, "because it comes when the cares, and the labours, and the dangers of the day are all over, and nothing remains but enjoyment and repose."

"It may be so," she answered with a sigh; and led the way into an adjoining chamber, where a table was laid with viands, which I neither particularly noticed at the time, nor shall attempt to recapitulate here. The wines indeed were not to be forgot; for all the most exquisite vintages of the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Garonne, were there; and in a state of perfection which I had never before, and perhaps never since have tasted.

Frank drank deep. He was usually moderate to a fault; but now, he seemed to seek by every means to raise his spirit from its sleep. He drank deep; but not too deeply. Reason reeled not on her throne; no perception was clouded, no faculty obscured; but on the contrary, the dull reserve which shadowed him was cast away at once; and his mind shone forth in all its native splendour. The fair

syren at whose side he sat, put forth all her powers; but whether in light wit, or deep feeling, or refined thought, or elegance of language, she found herself outdone by the young soldier she strove to conquer; and at last, driven for recourse to simple beauty, as her only means of triumph, she sat and smiled, supreme at least in that, not unwilling to yield the palm in all the rest to one whom she viewed with pleasure, still mingled with surprise. Perhaps too, the evident admiration with which she was herself regarded—the certainty that her presence, like the light of the sun waking into being the beauties of creation, called forth all the splendour she looked upon, made her pleased with a display of powers which were brought into action by herself.

Surprise was the predominant feeling in my own bosom at all that I saw and heard. I was aware indeed of the deep stores with which my brother had treasured a mind of immense capabilities; but I had never dreamed of seeing those capabilities so speedily turned to account, those treasures so easily brought forth, and so splendidly displayed. I had never in-

deed seen him fail in any thing to which he bent his energies, but I had never fancied that those energies could be roused even for a moment by a woman's smile. For a time, I bore my share in the conversation; but as so great and sudden a change came over my brother, I became silent, and sat and listened in no small wonder. Lady Eleanor permitted no pause. She sought not indeed any longer to shine. Either skilfully contented with the advantage she had gained, she struck not one useless blow for a won victory; or giving herself really up to pleasure, she strove to enjoy to the utmost such conversation as she seldom met. She suffered not her part, however, to flag; but with quick and easy brilliancy, supplied materials for a thousand brief bright sallies; and, running up and down the diapason of human wit and feeling, seemed to try every tone of my brother's heart and mind, like a skilful performer on some new fine instrument.

I believe Frank had almost forgot that I existed; and for more than an hour, he continued a conversation in which, though he shone more than any, the object of his shining

was not at all himself, while it must have been still evident to Lady Eleanor, that the spirit of all this brightness emanated from her own eyes. At length, his look happened to fall upon me; and whether it was, that that circumstance suddenly recalled our former days and his former character—whether he felt ashamed of a gaiety at which he had often sneered, or feared that his bosom was of glass, and that I should see the new passions that were working disowned within, I know not; but he suddenly paused, resumed his chilly reserve, and taking leave of our fair hostess for the night, retired to the apartments prepared for us, to confer with the quarter-master, who had been sent for during our supper.

CHAPTER VI.

THE chambers assigned to us were large and lofty, and communicated with each other through two spacious tiring-rooms; in one of which sat the quarter-master and a serjeant, ready to receive orders and to make their report. Nothing, however, had occurred to disturb our night's repose. No news had been received of either Goring or Skippon. William Fells had not returned; and the reconnoitring parties which had been sent out to beat the country, had met with no enemy, but, on the contrary, had heard reports that the whole force of the royalists had marched towards London. A thousand rumours were of course current through the country; some declaring that a battle had been fought on Blackheath,

the Parliamentarians defeated, and the King re-established in London; others stating that Fairfax had outmanœuvred Lord Norwich, got in the rear of his army, destroyed the bridges, and cut off his supplies. By one account Hales had been seen proceeding with all speed towards France to negotiate with Cardinal Mazarin, and by another the fleet had entered the Thames, sailed up to London, and threatened to fire upon the city if the Monarch were not released. It is not necessary here to enquire how many drops of truth were mingled with all this ocean of falsehoods, but from the very circumstance of nothing being clearly known, except that no troops had been seen for some days within ten miles of the village, we inferred that the enemy were farther from us than we had been at first led to imagine. The country also was stated to be generally loyal; and in many places in the immediate vicinity of Penford-bourne, the peasantry had been found arming in the King's favour.

With these quieting assurances, we retired to bed. I, having lost my valet, was obliged to undress myself in silence, a thing wonder-

fully disagreeable, when one has accustomed oneself to wind up the day by one of those drowsy gossipings, which are the best passports to the land of sleep : but as an indemnification, I could hear through the open doors of the tiring-rooms, godly Gabriel Jones holding forth to his master on the perfections of our fair hostess.

“ She is, in truth, a goodly and a glorious creature ; a cunning and miraculous piece of work ; and were it not that her servants declare that she is as pure and undefiled in spirit, as she is beautiful in form, she is one of those whom it would befit young gentlemen to avoid, for fear of temptation. Verily, as I saw her but now, crossing the corridor to her bed-chamber just opposite, with her two maids lighting her across—verily I was moved, and said to myself, Lo ! the Queen of Sheba.”

Frank listened in silence, as he usually did, distilling all he heard through the alembic of his own brain ; which—however mingled and compounded might be the mass poured into it by the ear—generally contrived to separate the real spirit, from that with which it was adulterated. How long Gabriel was suffered to discourse,

and what were the inferences which my brother drew from his holdings-forth, I know not, for I soon paid tribute to the son of Erebus, and heard no more ; nor were dreams wanting to my sleep with all their strange vagaries — dreams, which sometimes tell the secrets of his own heart to the sleeper, long before his waking eyes would dare to pry into that dark cabinet, which the thief-like visions of the night break open at a blow. I know not well what they were on this occasion, but a confused crowd of painful images passed across my mind, the most predominant of which was, that Lady Eleanor Fleming had stabbed Emily Langleigh before my eyes ; and that my brother held my arms, while the assassination was committed. So strong was the impression, that I started up, and before I was well awake, grasped my sword. But all was darkness round me ; and after gazing about for several minutes upon the blank vacancy, endeavouring to call to mind where I was, I again lay down, and slept with less disturbed repose.

The sun was high before I awoke, and starting up, I hastened half dressed to my brother's

chamber, unwilling that either he or I should seem to neglect our military duties in the soft comforts of our new quarters ; but the apartment was vacant, both door and window were open ; and as I turned to quit the room, Gabriel Jones entered, as if to aid in dressing his master. He seemed—for it was never possible to ascertain whether the look he put on was any thing more than seeming—as much surprised as myself, to find that Frank, who was naturally not very matutinal in his habits, had risen before me.

“ It is not yet the sixth hour,” said he, “ at which time he charged me to rouse him. But verily, his honour does well to watch, with his light burning,” added the knave in the tone of a dull bagpipe. “ Does not the apostle say—”

Without waiting for the text, I hastened back to my own chamber, completed my toilet, and, running down stairs as fast as possible, turned my steps towards the village. A complication of shrubberies and winding walks, with high screens of neatly-trimmed laurel and holly, swept away to the right hand of the avenue ; and, fancying that if I could make my way

through, I should reach the regiment in half the time which the other road required, I entered the first gravelled path I found, and sped onward like light. I got into such a labyrinth, however, that I was soon obliged to turn back ; and in a moment after, as I was seeking my way out, I heard my brother's voice speaking quick and eagerly. I was walking rapidly, when the sounds first struck my ear ; but from an instinctive feeling that he would wish no listeners to his words but the person to whom they were addressed, I suddenly stopped and looked for some way to extricate myself from the shrubbery.

There appeared no side path however, and before I had determined whether to go back or advance, I caught the sweet tones of Lady Eleanor ; they were lower than those of my brother, but more distinct, and my pause had given the two time to come nearer, so that before my utmost speed could carry me away, both her answer and a part of my brother's rejoinder had reached my ear. In my haste what was said carried no distinct meaning to my mind. It was one of those impressions, the

memory of which gradually becomes stronger than the thing itself; and though at first I scarcely marked the import of what passed, I remembered the moment after, the very words which had been used.

“What indeed would not woman sacrifice for a man she loved?” said Lady Eleanor — “but I speak on hearsay,” she had added in a gayer voice, “for I never yet felt what love is.”

“Nor I,” replied my brother, “Nor I till—”

I turned away, as I have said, as fast as possible; and, as they walked slowly, I was soon out of earshot. For some way I went on with the speed of light, but the sounds which I had heard kept returning upon my memory; I could not doubt the meaning of what had been said, and the tumult of thoughts and feelings which filled my bosom and my brain, soon moderated my pace. “What, what was it,” I asked myself, “that Frank could dream of in his present conduct? Was he mad? Was he delirious? or was he worse?” But I little knew as yet the effect that love could have upon a mind like his, nor believed that a heart that had hitherto seemed incapable of feeling it, could yield itself

blindly up to the wildest impulses of a passion which he had affected to condemn a thousand and a thousand times.

I paused and pondered for long, not feeling myself called upon in his absence to make great speed towards the general quarters. My walk however ended in the village, and I proceeded to make such arrangements as seemed necessary. Nearly an hour elapsed before Frank appeared. He was pale and thoughtful, somewhat absent and careless in his commands, but at the same time peremptory in his tone, and more reserved than ever.

The officers, who were generally either the sons of our greater farmers, or of the minor gentry in our neighbourhood, did not of course presume to take any notice of their commander's conduct; and I was naturally desirous of seeing every thing proceed as usual, and did all in my power to relieve the evident agitation of mind under which my brother was suffering. At first he seemed somewhat embarrassed by my presence, and once spoke to me in a harsh and imperious tone, which I might have foolishly resented under any other circumstances; but feeling for him more than he knew, I refrained

from all opposition, remedied some contradictory orders he had given ; and, when all the military business of the morning was over, went back with him towards the house, to wait the coming of our messenger from Lord Goring, whose return we expected would take place about midday.

Frank walked slowly on for some way, leaning on my arm in silence, and bending his eyes upon the ground. He was not so much absent as embarrassed ; and his mood seemed one of those varying uncertain tempers of mind, in which a man, unable to approve and unwilling to condemn himself, would willingly seek for sympathy were he not afraid of meeting censure, and would gladly find any one to encourage that for which he has himself found no excuse, yet is quite ready to quarrel with any person, rather than quarrel with his own conduct—a mood, in short, which, like some of the sultry days between spring and summer, may pass off in sunshine, in rain, or in thunder, according to a breath of wind. He looked up more than once, after we had entered the park ; and there seemed a struggle in his bosom, whether he should speak or not. But that flowing confi-

dence, which is generally a quality of youth, was contrary to all his habits, and he remained silent for some time. At length, when we were perhaps within ten paces of the house, he paused and grasped my arm, saying, in a tone that went to my heart, "Harry! my dear brother, I am not so happy as I have been; and something tells me that you and I have left happiness behind us."

I did not well know what to say, without betraying that I knew more than he communicated; and, I am afraid that I answered him with a common-place—a thing for which he of all men felt the most disgust. "Nonsense, Frank," I replied: "We shall have orders to march before this day's noon; and before to-morrow's, you will have forgotten all these sad thoughts."

He looked at me sternly for a moment, and then turning away, as if I could not comprehend any thing he felt, he abruptly entered the house without speaking.

Before I had time to add any thing either, to what I had said, we were both in the dining-hall, and no longer alone.

If he had not met from me the kind of sympathy he desired, he received from the mistress of the mansion a sort of silent consolation, which was but too irresistible. What had passed between them, while out, I know no farther than I have stated; but it seemed as if the lady felt that there was something to be compensated. Perhaps she had given him pain — perhaps had done so intentionally; for it is sometimes both sweet and politic to lay up something to atone, when atonement is easy. At the same time, as if by a mutual understanding, no notice was taken of their former meeting that day. It remained, as far as they knew, a secret confined to their own bosoms; no very safe link of connexion between two such beings as they were. At all events she received him to her breakfast-table with a glad, yet diffident glance; and while she welcomed me gaily and lightly, she spoke to him with that soft and tender manner, which few hearts are well enough fortified to resist. Wit and brilliancy towards him were all laid aside; and the sole fascination she used was gentleness. But it did

fascinate, and the more because those who saw it, felt that no other charm was wanting, though all but it were unemployed. There was a languid paleness, too, over her countenance, which spoke of feelings disturbed, and which that alchemist, Vanity, might turn both to matter for hope and interest, while an occasional quick flush, which rose in her beautiful cheek when her eyes suddenly met his — and which could not be feigned — gave the value of truth to more than what her words, and all that her manner implied.

The silence and reserve which had come over my brother once more, soon wore away under the influence of those eyes and that voice; and I felt that, were I not present, much would be said that many an after-thought could never cancel. But, though the situation was not a pleasant one; and, though I would have given worlds to have been where they wished me — far away — for I trust their wishes sent me no farther — yet I determinately held my place; for I sincerely believed that Frank had lost his better judgment for the time, and I hoped that my presence would

keep him from farther rashness. How far I was justified in that conclusion, and how far the irksome company of a third person may not, like weight upon an arch, make strong love the stronger, I do not know ; but at all events I did my best, at the expense of feeling that I made myself exquisitely disagreeable, to keep my brother from plunging into engagements which in his situation were madness indeed. Before noon I trusted also that commands to march immediately, would reach us from Lord Goring ; and I hoped that time and absence, and exciting scenes, would eradicate from my brother's mind a passion, which I deemed, from its brief existence, could not be very deeply rooted.

God knows I felt not to the full how disinterested were my hopes, for I went not on to calculate all the consequences which must follow either course my brother pursued. I only saw that he was nourishing a passion that would meet my father's strongest opposition, and which, if persisted in, would bring misery and disunion into the bosom of his family. The possibility of my brother resisting my father's expressed will, I never dreamed of ;

nor do I think did he ; but I saw that, any way, Frank was laying up a store of uncom-
fort for himself ; and I did not pause to con-
sider what benefit his conduct might produce
to me.

I sat, therefore, and joined in the conver-
sation, affecting not to perceive that aught but
common courtesy influenced my two compa-
nions. There was a consciousness, however, in
their own bosoms which caused them perhaps
to suspect me of seeing more deeply than the
surface ; but the suspicion was evidently but
transitory. Lady Eleanor often turned her
eyes upon me with a scrutinizing glance, but I
took care to betray no knowledge ; and the
conversation, principally carried on by her and
Frank, like a clear sunny stream passing over
the pebbles of its bed, touched lightly upon a
thousand topics, mellowed them in its own trans-
parent depth, and lighted them with the bright
rays which poured through the current of the
discourse, from the fire in their own hearts.

Noon approached and passed ; and some
grand massive clouds, heavy and detached in
the broad expanse of blue, floated over the

sun, and gave a coolness to the air. Frank, tired of my presence, and impatient under the excitement of his new sensations, proposed to call our troopers to saddle, and manœuvre the regiment on the village green. "In hopes," he said, "fair lady, that we may have an inspector-general, whose soft eyes will see but few faults in our poor efforts."

"If there be any faults," replied Lady Eleanor, "I will try hard to see them, I confess—for I feel afraid," she added in a lower tone, "of being but too blind."

"In sweet charity, be blind still, dear Lady," replied my brother in the same voice. "I fear, in this world, opening one's eyes is always a day too soon, especially to faults," he added aloud, "and therefore I beg that you will keep your eyes fixed upon my brother Harry's troop, which he has brought into more perfect discipline than any of the rest — nay, to say sooth, his fellows go through their manœuvres with a precision only to be equalled by the learned cats at a fair. This is one of our troops of arquebusiers, and, good faith ! to see the worthies prime their pieces, handle their matches,

give fire, and file off to let the second, third, fourth, or fifth rank do the same, one would think them the priests of some papistical church, they set to their work so reverently."

A slight flush came over the cheek of our fair hostess, but it passed away in a moment.

"Do not abuse my troop, Frank," replied I; "it is the one will do best service in the field, depend upon it."

"Nay, I do not abuse it," he answered, with that spice of bitterness which he could seldom repress. "I say they are most uncommonly exact; and when they get their carbines to their shoulders, they put me ever in mind of fiddlers in an orchestra—nay, turn not red, Harry—I mean that they keep their time as well. But hie thee to the regiment, my good brother and adjutant; turn them out on the green, and, as soon as this fair lady is prepared, I will escort her down to witness our evolutions."

Such a command could not be disobeyed, though its motive was evident enough. Lady Eleanor even requested Colonel Masterton, by no means to stay for her, when his pre-

sence might be wanted elsewhere — but her tone did not much enforce her words. Strange indeed it is that such things should be ! yet — while we all think we are speaking one tongue — there are a hundred different languages brought in, to modify our mother English, even in the simplest conversations. There is the language, so often talked of, of the eyes ; and there is the language too of the tone, and the language of the gesture, and the language of manner, and the language of emphasis. In short, every one in this world speaks Babel, pure Babel ; and very, very often the whole force of a thousand other tongues is employed to contradict the faint, false words that are dropping conventionally from our lips.

Lady Eleanor begged my brother, on no account to remain for the purpose of escorting her ; but the tone, the manner, the eyes said *stay* ; and Frank had suddenly become possessed of a fund of courtly politeness, which would on no account suffer him to leave her side.

Our horses had for some time been standing saddled at the door ; and mounting with all speed, the commands I had received were soon

obeyed, the troopers in their saddles, and the regiment drawn up.

We had still to wait long for the appearance of the lady, whose preparations struck me as somewhat tedious. After a time, however, she appeared, riding a beautiful pawing jennet, accompanied by my brother on horseback, and followed by more than one servant mounted and dismounted. Frank was all life and spirit, and very different was his manner of command that day, from that to which the regiment was accustomed. His animation had of course its effect upon the men, and all our evolutions were performed with an ease and brilliancy I had never before witnessed. Lady Eleanor's jennet, well trained, though spirited, stood quietly through all the noise and bustle of our brief review. At length, after speaking a few words to her for the purpose of ascertaining whether it would also stand fire, Frank gave the word for the two troops of harquebusiers, which in those days formed a part of every regiment of cuirassiers, to blow their matches and each line to give a parting salvo, ere they filed off. The order was promptly obeyed ;

but, at the discharge of the very first troop, Lady Eleanor's jennet took fright, and galloped like the wind over the green towards the park. The rider kept her seat with admirable horsemanship as long as the animal remained upon the level ground ; but, wild with fear, and knowing its own pasture, the jennet attempted to leap the low brick wall that separated the grounds from the village, caught the coping with its heels, and fell, throwing the lady to all appearance lifeless on the turf. In an instant—before I had time clearly to see what had passed—Frank's horse had cleared the wall at a little distance, and he was by her side. The regiment, and the whole world, I believe, were forgot ; and raising her in his arms, he bore her across the park towards the house, followed by a crowd of servants and of the inferior neighbours, who on the commencement of the review had collected within the park wall to see the sight.

The command in chief, of course, fell upon me, in my brother's absence ; and assuming a degree of his own sternness, to repress some merriment which his eagerness to succour the

lady had occasioned, I went through the customary forms, and once more dismissed the troopers to their quarters. When all was concluded, I too hastened up to the house, in truth really anxious for the safety of the lovely woman, who, though undoubtedly the willing cause of my brother's infatuation, was, I believed, unconscious of the evil likely to result from the passion whose seeds she was busily planting in his bosom. I was admitted by the servants to the withdrawing-room, to which she had been conveyed, and found her lying on the pile of cushions, beside which we had first beheld her. A maid and my brother were all who were present; but the lady was by this time perfectly recovered; and was answering Frank's repeated inquiries by assurances that she was unhurt, and by a thousand thanks for the assistance he had afforded, and the kindness he had shown. The assistance, indeed, she would insist upon believing to be far greater than Frank would allow — indeed far greater than that which really had been rendered. The horse, she declared, would certainly have trodden upon her as she lay, had not Colonel Masterton

come to her assistance ; and though my brother pledged his word that the poor jennet, whose fright had caused all the alarm, had gone half over the park before he could possibly arrive, she clung to the idea of his having rescued her from danger, and magnified the debt to justify the greater gratitude.

Although she had escaped without any farther injury than such as mere fear might be supposed to occasion, Lady Eleanor continued to recline during the rest of the day ; and, with her beautiful limbs stretched upon her moorish couch, with every accessory of beauty and luxury, a languid softness in her eyes, and an air of negligent exhaustion over her whole form, she looked like a fairer type of that famed Egyptian queen, who made the mighty of the earth her slaves.

Thus hour passed after hour ; and Frank remained chained to her feet — chained, ay ! no negro slave with golden collar graven with his master's name ever bore the badge of servitude more plainly. No actual summons it is true, called him from her. We had established a line of sentries up the avenue ; and re-

ports were made from the regiment every hour. Our horses stood ready at the gate, and all things were prepared to march at a moment's notice, on the return of our messenger. But the very uncertainty of how long the happiness he enjoyed might last, made it but the more intoxicating, the more dangerous, to my brother ; and the hourly expectation of a summons to quit charms which had so captivated him, and to abandon feelings that he had never known before, perhaps made those feelings shoot their roots more deeply and rapidly into his heart than they would have done under any other circumstances.

However that might be—whatever might be the cause of the suddenness of the change which had come over his whole character, and had transformed him from the most reserved, and calm, and cold, of God's creatures, to the most ardent, quick, and impassioned—so it was ; and I verily do believe, he would even then have taken a distaff and have spun, had those lovely lips demanded it.

Nor was the lady herself less touched with the same fire. There was certainly more of

manner in her conduct, — she had more command over herself — a power which, while it shaded in her, with a veil of female delicacy, the same flame which blazed forth in his every word and look, gave an air of art and study to her demeanour, which at that time almost led me to believe that she was playing a part. But a thousand touches of deep feeling escaped her, even then, which after-knowledge of the world has taught me to judge more rightly; and thence to feel sure, that, at that period of which I speak, she loved deeply, and for the first time. Her's was the passion of one who had long trifled with love, without ever feeling it; but who at last was profoundly wounded by the weapon she had used against others; while Frank's was the first, deep, powerful, maddening affection of one, who, long immovable, was hurled headlong from his strength at last.

The hours passed on, and no tidings arrived of our messenger. I could not suppose that any evil chance had befallen him; for he was one of those happy people that invariably find some way to get out of a scrape. Being also dressed with puritanic simplicity, totally un-

known in the country, and guarded by as much shrewd cunning as ever fell to the share of mortal, he had every chance of reaching Lord Norwich's head-quarters unopposed: but still he did not return; and I was uneasy at his absence. There was that sort of vague uncertainty about our situation — that consciousness of a thousand dangers surrounding us, together with that ignorance of the shape they might assume, or the side on which they might attack us, which to my feelings was worse than almost any more positive and ascertained peril. With my mind unoccupied, my passions disengaged, I could not rest satisfied with such a state of things; and seeing that Frank was growing totally careless on the subject, and only regarded each hour's report as interruption to sweeter discourse; hopeless also of rousing him from his apathy, I proposed to go forth to reconnoitre the country myself.

Frank consented with the best grace in the world; and Lady Eleanor, though she murmured something concerning my indefatigable zeal, did not oppose my going with any of those words that command.

I mounted therefore, and sallied forth, followed by a serjeant's guard; but though for more than three hours I examined the country between the village and Maidstone; enquired of every peasant, and climbed every eminence; strained my eyes in examining the wide country round, and exhausted all my wit in catechising many an ignorant, obstinate, thick-headed boor; I could obtain no information, either of Goring or Skippon, and returned convinced that both were much farther from us than we had first been taught to believe.

As we came nearer to our quarters, the old castle on the hill caught my eye; and it immediately struck me, that from its commanding situation I should gain a better view of the country, if I could but climb to some of the still standing pinnacles, than could be obtained from any of the neighbouring points. The hill upon which it was placed, was very steep and rocky, but clothed with wood, from the little stream (or bourne, as they called it) at its base, to the green platform on which the old fortress stood. The space between indeed was varied by many a bold face of cliffy sandstone and

many a detached bank unclothed by herb or flower; but round the whole, as I have said, swept the remains of some old forest, which probably at one time had covered all the neighbouring country. Through this wood appeared one or two paths, winding amongst the bold masses of rock, that broke the rounded green tops of the oak and the beech, apparently terminating at the esplanade above; and by one of these I determined to make my way up to the castle.

Leaving my horse therefore below, with the troopers, who sheltered themselves under the shade of the wood side, I began to climb the hill. It was by this time verging towards the evening, but with the sun still high and powerful, so that the ascent was somewhat fatiguing, and I paused more than once to recover breath. One of my halts, however, was disturbed by several stones rolling down upon my head, as if some one were walking along the steep and narrow path above; and, looking up, I strove to discover who or what it was that preceded me, but I saw no one; and as it might very well be a sheep, a goat, a deer,

or even a bird, I proceeded without farther notice.

Before I had reached the top I perceived that the path which I was following wound away by an easy slope to the farther side of the hill; and at the same time, directly before me, —with its grey stones overhanging a mass of rocky cliff not a hundred yards from me, but with a somewhat precipitous ascent between— I saw through the trees the angle of the highest tower—which had still resisted even Time, that great commander, who destroys, by his unremitting siege, more castles than the sap and mine. The sally-port, for ages so carefully barred and watched, now stood wide open, for the entrance of whatever being chance might bring to invade the territories no longer guarded by any thing but solitude and desolation.

The beaten path, as I have before said, took another turn to reach some other part of the building; but, making myself a way over the roots of the trees, and the high bank which intervened, I soon reached the postern, which man's foot seemed to have left untrodden

for long years ; and, climbing the grassy and ruined staircase, that wound through the thick wall, I reached the battlement above. Thence I cast my eyes over the whole country which lay beneath my feet, spread out in sunshiny magnificence. The many roads which intersect that rich part of England, wandered away from my feet in a thousand directions, like the minute traces which the lizards leave behind upon the fine sand ; and I could perceive, here and there, a group of country people plodding quietly homeward ; but nothing to cause alarm or to excite suspicion. The evening was not far advanced, but, nevertheless, the great orb of day had so far declined as to group the trees and woods in broad masses of light and shade, while the grand floating clouds, which would fain have been thunder-storms, cast immense blue shadows over detached portions of the landscape, contrasting splendidly with the laughing daylight, in which the whole of the surrounding scene rejoiced.

My object certainly was more to examine than to admire ; but after having gazed in vain,

as far as discovery went, I stayed some time to let my eye rest upon a scene, the calm, rich, peaceful extent of which fell upon my heart with a sensation of stillness so deep as almost to be melancholy.

CHAPTER VII.

AS I descended the stairs, with a slow and somewhat thoughtful step, I heard a rustling below, as of some persons moving through the long grass and brambles, which now tenanted the court-yard; and, luckily, before I had shown myself, the sound of people speaking reached me, and I paused. My progress, so far, had not given the alarm to the speakers. They continued their conversation; and the ruined walls of the tower in which I stood, collected every word that was spoken in the court below.

“Now, then,” said one voice, “on with thy tale, man—though why thou shouldst fear to speak before Jonah, I know not.”

“For fear he should not bury what he hears in a whale’s belly,” replied another.

“Pshaw! He is honester than thou art,” rejoined the first.

“The more reason he should not hear my counsel,” said the second. “But let us get up to the top of that tower, and see whether the Amalekitish horsemen have turned.”

“Nonsense!” replied the other, “they have gone back to their quarters. Besides, Jonah would give us notice if they were coming here. So on with thy tale, for I am in haste. He has bit at the bait, thou sayest, like a famished trout at a water-fly. What more?”

The first sound of the voices had made me pause; and as they went on, there were many reasons induced me to await patiently the termination of the conversation which the speakers had begun. It was evident, from what they said, that besides the two men below, there was another watching at no great distance, and from the clink of spurs, as well as from various other jingling sounds, it appeared clear that the speakers were well armed. In the first place, then, I did not choose, out of reach of assistance, to encounter unnecessarily two men whose words at once showed them

to be enemies to my party, with a third within call. In the next place, I believed them to be enemies who assumed the character of friends; and in any circumstances, whether as open or concealed foes, I felt myself perfectly justified in making myself master of their plans, in whatever way chance might furnish. I paused, therefore, and listened with all my ears; and never doubting that if they discovered me, immediate and deadly strife must be the consequence, I drew myself back into the dark turn of the stair, just above a spot where one side of the wall was broken away, determined over the gap thus left in the masonry, to hurl the first who attempted to come up, should their proposal of climbing the tower be renewed.

“ Well, then,” continued one of the voices, which I felt positively certain was that of my brother’s valet, Gabriel Jones, “ I told thee that he bit at the bait like a famished trout; but I did not tell thee that the bait seemed marvellous willing to be swallowed.”

“ I knew that, without thy telling,” replied the other voice, of whose sounds I did not feel near so sure, though I thought I had heard them

also before. He spoke in a sharp rough tone, I remarked; and it seemed to me, that though nothing was said which could give offence, there was something in the general subject of the conversation, which pained and irritated the person who now spoke, in a degree which scarcely brooked control. "I know that, without thy telling. Think'st thou I have known her from her childhood, and watched every turn of her mind till I could divine at a glance why her ribbons were of a particular colour, or why her kerchief was turned aside; and did not know that she could not sit beside any male thing for ten minutes, without striving to make it her slave? Ay! and with such power does she strive, that I never yet saw the man that could resist it."

"And thou thinkest that she is never touched herself by this same vanity of love?" demanded his companion.

"As the diamond that cuts glass is wounded by the glass that it cuts," replied the other, "so has she been ever."

"But so is she not now," replied the voice I took to be that of Jones, with the most deter-

mined accent: “for I tell you, Master Avery, that she is now as much in love with him as woman ever was with man. I have lived my day, and not for nothing, having known many women in a godly way; and, I say, she is more in love with him even than he with her. Ay, and as I know you have set her apart as your share of the spoil, and have heard say that you are as sinfully possessed with her fleshly beauties as the rest, and propose to wed her—”

“I wed her!” cried the other, in a tone of bitter negation—“I wed her!—I would as soon wed a viper that has stung me. I tell thee, man, she has done me wrong; and I will have my revenge. But wed her!—no, no, no, no, no! I will wed her rich lands and manors; but the marriage contract shall be a commission from the council of state, and she shall be named therein a sequestered malignant, giving harbour and countenance to vain and malicious persons, rebellious to the state and houses of parliament. Wed her! But she can wed no one without an act passes for allowing to all women the consolation of two husbands. But,

pshaw ! thou talkest nonsense : she loves him not. She plays with him as she has played with many a thousand others : she feels it not, whatever she makes him think."

" I see the tidings give thee pain to hear," replied his companion ; " and I have heard that thou didst once love her thyself."

" I did ! I did !" answered the person he called Avery, in a tone, and with a vehemence which showed how much passion overmastered reason ; " I did love her—madly—passionately. But I tell thee now, there is not in my bosom a particle of love as small as the grain of dust which escapes the careful housewife's eye. No ; there is no love, but some hate ; and I would give two fingers of my right hand,—ay ! of this right hand which serves me well when occasion calls for it—to think that she herself were wounded as thou sayest. Oh, to see her writhe under the passion she had so often mocked ! to see her burn with the same mad love ! to see her hopelessness ! or even more," he added, in a low, deep voice, " to see her infamy !"

" There is a hopeful chance of it all," an-

swered the other, with a sort of common-place tone of knavery, that discorded strangely with the deep and terrible passions which the voice of his companion had betrayed. "There is a hopeful chance of it all, if things be managed rightly."

"Pshaw!" cried the other; "I tell thee she does not—she cannot love,—it is not a part of her nature: she knows not what it is."

"Mark me then, good Master Avery," replied the first. "Why sits she even now with her hand clasped in his? Why did she lean her head upon his shoulder and weep like an infant within this hour, while telling him something that my ears could not catch, through the chink of the door?"

The other paused for some moments before he replied, as if the tidings that he heard took him by surprise; and I could hear him make two or three strides through the court-yard with a heavy foot.

"Ha!" cried he, as he did so; "ha! then she is caught indeed! Little did I think," he added, pausing—"Little did I think when I took care to let her hear of his coming, and

to spread the tidings of his beauty and gallantry, in order that she might invite him to her house, and entangle him in those bonds of amorous coquetry, which I well knew she would weave, — little did I think she would outdo my desires, twine the spider threads she has spread for so many round herself as well as him, and be caught in her own net, as well as fulfil my purpose of detaining him at her feet. But mark me ! mark me well, Matthew Hutchinson——”

Matthew Hutchinson ! I thought ; then after all, it is not Gabriel Jones ! Yet I could have sworn to the voice ; and as these thoughts passed through my brain, curiosity got the better of prudence, and taking a step forward, I leaned over the side of the broken wall, to gain a view of the speakers. I did not succeed, however ; and, in the effort I displaced one of the large stones, which—together with a mass of loose cement and some shrubs that had struck their roots therein—rolled away and fell close to where the others must have stood. Possibly they might catch a glimpse of my hand also, as I grasped the cor-

ner of the tower ; for the moment after came the words, “ We are overheard ! ” followed by a loud, long whistle ; and I could’ hear retreating steps, making their way through the brush-wood.

Instantly springing from my concealment, and resolved to run all risks for the purpose of discovering who were the speakers, I attempted to follow ; but the court was perfectly clear by the time I reached it. I darted from one part of the building to the other with the speed of light, but in vain. I rushed out upon the esplanade, but there was no one there. Not a step could I hear ; not a human being could I discover ; not a motion could I see amongst the shrubs, except when I startled a thrush from the leaves, and had to blush for half-drawing my sword upon a bird. All was clear, and calm, and still, with the evening sunshine sleeping quietly upon the grey ruin and the green ivy, as if the step of man had never disturbed the silence of the place since the ruin and the ivy had first clung together—quiet, as if no human voice had broken the hush, since those courts and

halls had been trod by the busy and the gay of other days. I could hardly believe my senses ; and again ran rapidly over every part of the building, which indeed seemed to offer small opportunity of concealment. But the second examination was as unsuccessful as the first ; and now, resolving to ascertain in some degree whether Gabriel Jones was really the speaker whose voice I had heard, by seeking him at the manor-house, I ran down the hill like lightning, and springing on my horse, ordered one half of the troopers to spread themselves round the edge of the wood on every side, and keep vigilant watch till they were relieved, stopping every person who came down from the hill above.

In the mean while, accompanied by the other half, I put my horse into a gallop, and never drew a rein till I arrived at the steps of the mansion. I entered without ceremony, and encountering one of Lady Eleanor's tiring-women in the second hall, I asked if she had lately seen Colonel Masterton's valet. She replied at once that, she had passed him not long before, as he sat reading

on the window-seat in the lobby. It was his usual place of saintly meditation, one of those broad window-seats, retiring thither from the unholy merriment of his fellow-servants in the hall. To the spot the woman mentioned, then, I hastened ; and undoubtedly there sat Gabriel Jones, with a bible in his hand, and bearing not the slightest mark of having quitted the house during the day. I fixed my eye keenly upon him ; he met it without a change of aspect. I spoke to him ; he replied in a calm unruffled tone.

What, then, could be the meaning of what I had heard ? I knew that I had no talent for remembering either voices or persons ; and therefore I doubted myself. Yet the tone and manner had been so like that of the canting varlet who followed my brother, that I had not for a moment doubted the identity of him and the person I had heard speak, till I found the latter was called Matthew Hutchinson.

I have reported the conversation of the speakers strictly as I heard it ; but it may be now necessary to say a word or two in regard to the interpretation I put upon it. Without some

latent link of connexion between myself and the persons who spoke, their words would have been uninteresting enough, but I had fancied myself absolutely sure that there was such a link, and while that certainty lasted, what they had said appeared of no slight import. Under the first impression, I had believed that the whole conversation referred to my brother and Lady Eleanor Fleming. It was applicable in almost every respect, as long as Gabriel was the undoubted speaker; but now it might refer as well to some other persons I had never seen; and entering my own chamber, I stood musing for a moment, in a state of doubt and uncertainty impossible to be expressed. In thinking over the conversation I had overheard, however, I began to remember several circumstances that were apparently at variance with my first idea, that the lady spoken of was Lady Eleanor Fleming. No names, it must be remembered, had been mentioned but those used by the two strangers to each other. One of the speakers had clearly inferred, that the woman of whom he spoke was bound by indissoluble ties to some one else. Now Lady Elea-

nor was a widow, the mistress of her own person and fortune—at least, so I had been taught to believe;—and though I felt sure that her union with my brother would cause eternal discord between my father and Frank, yet in every other respect she was qualified to become his wife. But such did not seem to be at all the situation of the person I had heard mentioned; and combined with the fact of my finding Gabriel Jones sitting quietly at the manor, this circumstance led me to believe that I had grossly deceived myself: nor could I help acknowledging that I must have done so, even while the sound of the hypocritical villain's voice kept ringing in my ears, and still assuring me that I was right.

The whole business, in short, confused and perplexed me; and at length, after sending to recall the troopers from the hill, and having somewhat rectified the disarray of apparel which my expedition had occasioned, I entered the withdrawing-room, in which my brother still sat by Lady Eleanor. I doubt whether he had ever moved, except to reach the book which he held in his hand, and from

which he had been reading to her some selected passages from Boccaccio. None of the extracts which that book contained, indeed, could offend the most modest ear ; but through the whole there was a strain of soft voluptuous sweetness, somewhat difficult for a young man to read safely to a lovely woman. Every one, I believe, must have felt that there are some things, which without having aught of positive evil in them, are dangerous from their very sweetness. Some pieces of music, for instance—some pieces of poetry that unnerve the heart and weaken the moral energies of the mind. They are like certain perfumes which, though sweet and balmy beyond all words, relax and overpower all the corporeal faculties. Such was the book, out of which Frank was reading. All that was evil had been carefully left out, but there was softness enough remaining to afford passion a bed of flowers.

Lady Eleanor lifted her head, and my brother ceased reading, as I entered ; but there seemed to be a new change come over them. All was calm. There was every now and then a glance of deep affection passed between them, which

I, who had beheld all that went before, marked and understood. I saw that their mutual hearts had poured themselves forth to each other, and that all had been spoken. But it is probable, that had any other persons come there suddenly, without previous knowledge, they would have seen nothing in the conduct of those two to excite a suspicion of what was passing in their bosoms. There was, it is true, in my brother's aspect, a degree of anxiety mingled with melancholy; but that might have been accounted for from a thousand other sources; and, though his eye often wandered over vacancy, as if it communed with things we could not see, and his words occasionally fell somewhat wide of the subject, yet the state of the country, and the responsibility of his command, might easily explain such absence of mind. It was only to my ear a certain softening of the tone when he spoke to her; only to my sight a peculiar glitter of the eye when it rested on her lovely form, that told what was the theme of his thoughts, when his mind seemed wandering afar.

As a matter of course, when first I returned, he asked some questions concerning my expedition; and I, in reply, simply stated the fact, that I had made a considerable circuit through the adjacent country, and that I had gained no information of the enemy. I gave no particulars, and he sought none; and all the news that he could furnish forth amounted to the statement that William Fells had not yet returned, accompanied by some expressions of wonder at his absence. Little anger, however, or impatience, mingled with his surprise; he was evidently growing quite contented with his present situation; his mind, concentrating all its energies upon one object, saw and was willing to see no other; and I doubted not that he wished William Fells might remain wherever he was till doom's-day, provided he himself might remain where he was, also.

To me Lady Eleanor was all that was kind and attentive; and there was a degree of timid softness in her manner, as if she feared me, and yet would fain have won my regard, which interested me in despite of myself. I felt as if I had injured her, by believing that she was the

person to whom the unseen speaker had referred ; and I was again obliged to acknowledge to myself, that I had no just cause to suppose her the original of the very unfavourable portrait they had drawn. That she had acquired a sudden and extraordinary influence over my brother, was all that I could lay to her charge ; but that she herself shared the passion she inspired, and brought along with her beauty, and talent, and fortune, and rank, at least in equal proportion to the endowments which Frank possessed, I could not doubt. If, therefore, the event of their love was unhappy, she was to be pitied more than blamed ; and I reasoned myself into believing, that I had done her gross wrong in attributing to her a character, affixed by two persons I did not know, to some one whose name had never been mentioned. My manner and my tone, which I am not sure had been at first so polite as either her station or her hospitality required, gradually softened into more kindly demeanour, under these reasonings. In addition to all the powers she naturally possessed of pleasing, she became an object of interest and thought to me. I could not help

looking upon her, I knew not well why, as one whose destiny was someway to be linked to me and mine ; and at the same time, the vague conviction of a thousand dangers and obstacles made me set down in my own mind her portion in our common lot, as one of unhappiness. I beheld her then, with the feelings wherewith we always regard any one doomed to suffer. But those sensations were still so undefined, as to take no part from the charms of her society ; and enchanted (though not to the same degree as Frank) with her grace, her beauty, and her wit, I yielded myself to an evening of enjoyment.

The hours flew rapidly ; and at supper, which was announced soon after my return, the conversation became of that varying kind—sometimes brilliantly gay, sometimes grave almost to sadness ; sometimes interrupted totally by those breaks of deep thought that words cannot, must not embody—which is perhaps more powerful in working upon the heart's feelings, than the brightest of man's wit alone. Reserve and unkindness, and I am afraid duty too, were forgotten, and all was free kindness and ease. I

was the first to put a check upon it, by observing most ill-advisedly—more as a thought that found unconscious voice than a premeditated remark—“Who would have thought, Lady Eleanor, that at this present moment we have known each other but four and twenty hours?”

My own heart was free; and Heaven knows, I meant no offence; but even as I spoke the blood mounted up over her neck, and cheeks, and brow, and forehead, to the very roots of that deep brown hair, that fell in hyacinthine masses round her face.

My brother started, and for a moment turned upon me a half-angry glance, as if he thought I meant to break in upon the pleasure of the moment by an implied reproof; but the annoyance which I began myself to feel at my ill-judged remark, and which showed itself by this time in my face, evinced my innocence of all offence; and he answered, “What is the real difference, Harry, between four and twenty hours and a life, or even an eternity? Nothing, believe me! Time is but a name. It is what is done in time that is the substance.

What are twenty-four centuries to the hard rock, more than twenty-four hours to man, or twenty-four minutes to the ephemera? Ay! even in our own existence, there are periods in which space, computed by its true measure of thoughts, feelings, and events, mocks the penury of man's artificial scale, and comprises a lifetime in a day. What matters it to me, how often the sun rises and sets? Since his last plunge into the depths of space, I have lived more years than ever I knew before."

Such a declaration I felt would bear no comment in his present state of mind, and I kept silence, praying heartily that our messenger might return before the next morning. Time wore on, however, and he did not come; and late at night we retired once more to our apartments. The doors of our dressing-rooms were open as before. On the previous night I suffered them to remain so, in consideration of the heat; but hearing Gabriel Jones once more begin his homily on the beauty of our hostess, with somewhat of unpleasant minuteness in his comments, I shut the door rather impatiently, feeling that I had no right to overhear my brother's conver-

sation with his servant. What passed, therefore, I know not ; but it went on long, now rising into a higher tone for a moment, now dropping into a low murmur. At length I heard Frank exclaim, ‘ Villain ! is such thy morality ? What meanest thou ? What wouldst thou have me do ? Speak out, Sir ! No inuendoes.”

The reply was couched in so low a tone, that even the whisper of it scarcely reached me ; but, the moment after, I distinctly heard a blow, followed by the words, “ Scoundrel and slave !” spoken in the voice of my brother, excited to a pitch of vehemence I had never known before. “ How dare you, for your miserable life, dream of so base a suspicion ? Away ! get thee gone ! Away, I say !”

But the valet still lingered ; and I could not but hear his low and droning voice, prolonging the conversation for some time after.

At length the door of the other room was shut, and I endeavoured to recover that disposition to sleep, which those sounds had disturbed ; but it was in vain. Before I could close my eyes, I heard Frank once

more begin to move in his dressing-room, and for more than an hour he continued to pace up and down with a quick and heavy footfall, which evidently betokened the agitation of his mind. Sleep I could not, though I tried all the many ways recommended to the watchful. I counted endless numbers, I kept my eyes fixed wide open upon vacancy, I strove never to let my thoughts rest upon any one subject; but the moment forgetfulness was sinking down upon me—the moment the heavy lid was dropping wearily over my eye, my brother's sharp irregular step roused me with a start to think of all that he was suffering. At length I could bear it no longer. Notwithstanding his coldness and reserve, I loved him deeply and truly. I felt for what I believed—what I knew indeed—he experienced; and aware how much the strongest mind in such moments requires consolation and support, I rose, and throwing on my morning-gown, I opened the door of the dressing-room.

He was still pacing up and down, habited in his night-gear, with his slippers on his feet, and his arms crossed upon his chest. The candles

had been suffered to burn untrimmed, till they cast a dim and ghastly light over the room, and his own face, haggard with struggling passions, showed a strange wild expression in the pale semi-obscurity of the apartment. His ear instantly caught the sound of the opening door, and he turned quick upon me with an expression of impatience and surprise, which might at another time have daunted me. But strong in fraternal regard, and resolved not to importune him for his confidence, yet not to be repelled in offering him consolation and assistance, I advanced towards him, and took the hand he neither yielded nor withdrew.

“My dear Frank,” I said, “I cannot see you so agitated, so different from what you usually are, without feeling for you, and offering you all that is in my power to offer. I am your younger brother, and perhaps not calculated to give you advice; but at all events I may yield you sympathy if not assistance. I do not ask your confidence; I see that you suffer; and I divine why you suffer. That is enough, and perhaps more than enough. Let us act as

brothers ; and at all events allow me to give you comfort if I can do no more."

He heard me to the end as usual—then seemed to struggle for a moment between habitual reserve and awakened kindness ; and at length, throwing his arms round me, as he sometimes had done in our boyhood, he exclaimed : " My dear Harry, you are indeed worthy of more confidence than my evil spirit will suffer me to place in any one. That villainous, pandering, hypocritical, fanatic !" he continued, bursting out with vehemence at some remembrance that seemed to come suddenly over his mind, " That villainous, pandering, hypocritical, fanatic ! The best service you could do me would be to shoot him through the head. He tempts me more than I believed Satan could have tempted."

" Nay !" said I, very well understanding who was the person he meant, though he had given him no name, " to shoot him through the head, though no more than a just reward, would hardly do : but it will be easy to send him back in irons to Masterton House. I as his

officer will do that, and take the whole blame on myself."

"No, no, no!" answered Frank, with melancholy bitterness; "What, to blab of my weakness? to fill our stern father's ears with his son's mad, hopeless, desperate passion? to cant about beauty and comeliness and carnal perfections, and to show forth how he would have stayed me from going down to drink of the pool, but lo! I would not? No, no, Harry; I have missed the move, and the villain must make some mistake in his game before I can give him check. Sending him back would never do—'twould but be giving him a rod to smite me. No, Harry, no! But what would you have me do, Harry? Speak! Not to get rid of him: but to get rid of myself; to conquer the inner devil, which is the worst of the two."

"If you ask me seriously, Frank," I answered, "I would have you tarry in this house no longer than to-morrow morning. Wait but till ten o'clock. Between daybreak and that hour, there will be full time for William Fells to return, if Lord Goring be within twenty miles. If he arrive not, conclude that some

mischance has happened, and march forward. Such is your duty as an officer, and your absence from this place will be the best thing that can befall you in every respect. You will then at all events learn whether you can conquer feelings, which, as far as I see, can but bring misery to all."

"But without any intelligence?" said Frank, "Impossible, Harry! Suppose William returns with orders and finds us gone?"

"Leave a sergeant's guard to bring him on with all speed;" replied I. "Let us march towards West Malling or Wrotham, near which the cavaliers must necessarily be making head, if, as we heard, they are retiring from Dartford."

"I will think of it," replied Frank; "I will think of it. But yet it would seem a fertile way of having our march traced, and our progress opposed, to leave an insignificant party in this village, with a full knowledge of our route. Yet I will think of it. In some circumstances a choice of evils is all that is left. Fare thee well, Harry; thank thee for thy kindness, and believe me, dear brother, that Frank is not

always as cold as he looks. Even now you have been a comfort to me, and so I will hie me to my bed and sleep."

To have been so, was a comfort to me also ; and though I doubted his resolution, and would fain have had him yield his promise to follow my advice, I dared not urge him farther ; but retired to my own chamber, and pillowed on the sweet thought of having soothed my brother's agitated mind, I soon tasted as sweet a slumber as ever I remember to have enjoyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

I SLEPT soundly, and I slept long. It was seven o'clock before I woke, and I found that this morning, as well as that which preceded it, Frank was up and forth before me. Little doubting that his minutes of early diligence would be given to Lady Eleanor, I hastened down to the village; but to my surprise I met him there. He was in the act, however, of sending off a second messenger to Lord Norwich,* with orders to return the next day if at all. I ventured to remonstrate as soon as I could speak with him alone, pointing out, that in efforts such as that in which we were engaged, delay was always worse than rashness.

It is extraordinary what a change a few brief

* George Lord Goring had before this time become Lord Norwich, and therefore the names are used indifferently; his claim to the title of Norwich never having been admitted by the Parliament.

hours will sometimes work in human beings. Those whom we left the night before all gay familiarity, and frank, free-hearted kindness, will rise—strange moody puppets that we are!—will rise, after a few hours' sleep, as cold and distant as a stranger. I had quitted Frank, with our mutual hearts overflowing with fraternal affection, and the iciness of his nature so far thawed, that I thought nothing could ever freeze it towards me again. But now I met him in the morning as chill as ever; and as soon as I spoke, he cut me short, abruptly.

“My determination is taken, Harry,” he replied.

“Then I hope, Frank,” I said, with a foolish degree of heat at finding myself so unexpectedly repelled, “that it has been formed on motives connected with the service of the King.”

“That, Sir, is my affair,” replied he, reddening; “I am here to command, I believe, and you to obey. At least, such, I think, is the import of the commissions we received at Masterton House.”

I offered no reply; and the messenger was despatched. My brother then proceeded to

make some quick and sharp inquiries about the regiment, with the brief activity of a man who, feeling that he has been—is—and will be—negligent of some important duty, strives to satisfy his conscience by a few minutes of hasty application. His energy, however, soon died away; and, at the end of half an hour, he mounted his horse, and rode back to the mansion, without taking any notice that such a being as his brother was upon the face of the earth. I paused for some moments, uncertain whether I would follow him thither, or remain at the village with the regiment. But mastering my indignation, I at length set out, and arrived shortly after himself.

To particularize the events of that day were useless. My brother, feeling that he had not behaved to me with the same kindness I had displayed towards him, was of course more cold and reserved in manner than ever. Knowing himself to be wrong in a great and important point, he would fain have believed me wrong in the minor one of respect towards my commanding officer: for many a man escapes the unpleasant task of blaming himself, when he

finds something to blame in those that show him his faults.

With Lady Eleanor, however, he was all joy and gladness; and by the despatch of the second messenger to Lord Goring, he seemed to think that he had won another day from fate. Finding myself *the one too much* to their happiness, and hopeless of effecting any benefit by staying, I proposed and received permission to enlist what men I could from the neighbouring villages. Thus I was absent during the greater part of the morning; and, with little difficulty, added nearly a hundred men to the numbers of the regiment. There never was such easy recruiting, for a military spirit had been encouraged in the country by both parties, which had spread through all orders; and in every village I found a number of men, only requiring a leader. Many had served before, and had been disbanded; and all were strong and powerful fellows, zealous in the royal cause, and ready to shed their best blood for the King's deliverance. The whole country I found decidedly favourable to the Monarch; and I could not help regretting that more ac-

tive and better combined measures were not taken to give effect to the true wishes of the people ; but so many reverses had befallen the cavaliers, that the chiefs in general were either timid from rebuffs, or rash from despair — were either hurrying on before their means were prepared, or delaying till they lost opportunity, that magic door by which man may reach every thing on earth, if he seize the one brief moment that it is open before him. I could not but regret — but when I thought of the conduct of my own brother, I could not wonder at the ill success of the royal cause. And thus indeed it was throughout that long and fatal struggle, which destroyed a good King and desolated a happy country. Each man who served, or pretended to serve the Monarch, in fact and truth served his own passions, his own interests, and his own prejudices first ; and then gave the dregs of his obedience to his master. Many loved the King, but the Parliament had taught even the cavaliers that he was not to be obeyed ; and the lesson was not the less destructively followed, because we affected to abhor it. During the evening, I gave my recruits

what little drilling could be forced into the time ; and endeavoured, as far as possible, to provide them with horses and arms ; but, of course, many of them were but raw soldiers, and all of them were scantily accoutred.

My brother came not near the regiment during the whole day ; and all the duties fell upon myself. These I performed as well as I could ; and towards sunset rode back to the mansion-house, hoping that now, at all events, the last day of our abode in that Circean dwelling was closing in. I found both Frank and Lady Eleanor more absorbed in each other than ever. Her eyes when I entered were full of tears ; but they were soon wiped away, and the evening passed as before. I never beheld her look so lovely. It seemed as if all her most potent charms had been reserved to shine out upon that last night of our stay. There was a continual variation of the colour in her cheek, that had in it something strange and striking ; there was a degree of soul and feeling in every movement, in every tone, that gave a new grace to her splendid form, a new sweetness to her soft thrilling voice ; and in her eyes

there was a deep powerful light, that seemed to spring from the very heart, and told of the fire within.

At about eleven o'clock we rose to retire to our apartments, and she bade us good night in a manner which seemed to speak that she felt we were going to sleep beneath her roof for the last time. I augured well from it, for Frank's resolution the next day; and felt full of hopes that all might be amended which had gone amiss. My brother entered his own chamber; and both the doors between his apartments and mine, were closed by his order. His rascally valet remained long with him; and I believe I was asleep before he went. My slumber was light however; and in the middle of the night I woke up without any apparent cause, and could not close my eyes again. What it was had roused me, I do not know. I had dreamed I heard a noise, but when I listened all was silence; and I addressed myself to sleep again. The attempt, however, was in vain, and rising from my bed, I approached the open window, through which I could see the beautiful stars shining in the purple air of a bright summer's

night. It was all grand and still and solemn ; and the eternal depth of space lying far and uninterrupted in its transparent darkness, seemed more tangible, yet more vast than in the daytime, when that profound interminable expanse swarming with stars, is veiled from our eyes by a woven canopy of sunbeams, that curtain round the world we dwell in. Having gazed on the sky till I was wearied with its immensity, my eye then fell upon the lawn, and in a moment after I saw a figure emerge from the shadow of the trees, with the arms seemingly folded on the breast, and with a slow and musing step walk forward across the open ground, and enter one of the opposite walks. After thinking for some time, endeavouring to divine who it could be, I sat down by the window to mark whether it would return to the house or not.

The wind was westerly, and a minute or two after I thought I heard the distant sound of horses' feet. I listened, and was confirmed in the belief. Through the still silence of all the world, I clearly distinguished the galloping of several horses, borne to my ear by the breeze, and alternately low and loud, as the riders

passed by the various little woods, with which the country round was clothed. At length the sound seemed lost, as the horses ran down into the valley on the other side of the hill which skirted the village to the west. A moment after, however, it rose again much louder ; and then, upon the luminous verge of the sky, where the lingering rays of the last long midsummer day still tarried, as if to catch a glance of their successors, I could distinguish the figure of a single horseman. In an instant two more appeared, and then a fourth, as if in pursuit ; and on they pushed at full speed towards the village.

Towards the top of that hill was stationed our first picket ; and before the heads of the three last horsemen had disappeared, as they descended the slope, there came a quick, sharp flash,—another, and another ; and, a moment or two after, the report of distant fire-arms.

Hurrying on some clothes, I snatched up my sword, and passed through the dressing-rooms to awaken my brother. I called : he did not answer. I approached his bed ; it was vacant ; but this,—as it had been his custom sometimes,

at Masterton House, to rise and walk forth on fine summer nights—did not surprise me, and the mystery of the figure I had seen upon the lawn was explained; though, at the same time, this watchfulness, night after night, showed me painfully the agitated state of his mind.

Without farther search, I hastened down stairs, and out into the avenue. The sentry at the door had heard the report, but he had not seen the flash; and bidding him tell the Colonel, I hurried on to the village for farther information. The whole regiment was now mustering on the green, and in a very good state, for such young soldiers, to repel a night-attack. By the light of candles, lanterns, and lighted matches, however, I beheld, in the midst of the whole, my own servant, William Fells, bleeding from a wound on his cheek, but, to all appearance, not seriously injured.

His story was soon told. He had not reached Lord Goring, he said, notwithstanding all his efforts. On setting out, he had proceeded without stopping, till he was within six miles of Maidstone; and affecting to be terrified with a godly horror at falling into the hands of

Goring's crew, he had gained from the people of the country full information concerning the Royalists, who had halted by this time in force, near Wrotham. Accordingly, having quitted the direct road to Maidstone, he turned towards the North; and, as his horse was weary, determined not to hurry, although his slow pace might make him a borrower of the night. Before he had proceeded far, he heard the sound of horsemen following; and, turning round, saw a considerable party approaching at full speed. As their horses seemed fresh, and his was nearly worn out, he deemed it best to affect unconcern, and let the horsemen pass him if they would.

When they came up, although he was perfectly prepared to be questioned as to his journey, he was very much surprised to find himself suddenly seized, his arms pinioned, and his horse's bridle turned back the way he had come. He did every thing he could, the fellow said, to deceive the enemy. He enacted Gabriel Jones to a hair; he talked about Egyptians and Amalekites, and the land of Canaan, and the oppressors of Israel; and he even ended by singing a psalm.

But all would not do. His captors told him they knew him well, and every thing concerning him; and one of them admonished him sharply not to mock God's saints; and calling him a son of Belial, accompanied his warning with a severe blow from the pommel of his sword.

Into whose hands he had fallen he knew not; but he was carried to a village about ten miles from Penford-bourne, and there he was secured in the upper room of a house, where his soul was tormented night and day with the godly exercises of the devout inhabitants. He was prevented from moving hand or foot by a rope which, first twisted and tied round his wrists, was then bound fast about his ankles, at which point the ends were secured. In the morning following the day of his arrest, he had bread and water given him; but the only information he could gain from the person who brought it was, that he was sure either to be hanged or sent to the Colonies. This prospect gave poor William the energy of despair; and with his teeth he absolutely gnawed through the rope that bound him, ere the second day was

completely over. He next, with the very same cord, once more united, let himself out of the window into the stable-yard, while all the house were howling their midnight devotions in the lower room. He had still a good way to drop down, he said, and sprained his leg in doing so ; but this slight injury did not prevent him from proceeding to the stable, nor from taking the strongest and freshest horse he could find, and setting off with all speed.

The sound of the animal's feet was the first announcement that the fanatics received of the departure of their prisoner ; but, in a moment, three of them were on horseback after him, and the flight became a race. William, however, was as good a judge of horses as ever sat in a saddle ; and having had his choice of the stable, his judgment was put to the fairest test ; but in the present instance it justified him fully, and he still kept before his pursuers. Thus, taking the old castle on the hill for his landmark, which he could dimly see through the twilight of a summer's night, he reached the hill above the village. There, however, those who followed, and who seemed to know our quarters as

well as he did himself, threatened loudly to shoot him if he did not stop; and one of them fired his carbine, which wounded him in the cheek, as he turned his head to measure the distance he was off. The shot was returned by the out-lying picket; and finding that he had escaped past recovery, the fanatics gave up the pursuit and galloped off.

On inquiry, I found that he had been asked no questions, the persons who had taken him seeming perfectly as well acquainted with the design of his journey as he was himself, and laughing to scorn his attempts to deceive them, by assuming the cant of their tribe.

He had seen no one that he knew, though he declared that he had plainly distinguished the voice of Walter Dixon, the companion of our march; and upon him and Gabriel Jones all his suspicions fell, concerning the treachery which had evidently been practised. My own doubts certainly jumped with his, but, of course, I refrained from giving any opinion upon the subject till we had farther proof: for why I suspected Walter Dixon, I knew not; and yet there was upon my mind a conviction of his treason very

nearly as strong as if it had been the matter of direct evidence.

The news of the messenger's return had, by this time, reached the house, and his story was just finished when my brother arrived. Frank heard William Fells repeat his tale in silence, made no comment, ordered the outposts to be reinforced, the regiment back to quarters, and merely remarking, that we must wait till midday for the answer to his last despatches, took his way back to the house.

I followed him instantly, and with the heat of youth and impatience, remonstrated vehemently against this new delay. It was clear from the information which William had obtained, that Lord Goring was encamped a little to the west of Maidstone; it was equally clear, that no force of any magnitude lay between us and the head quarters of the cavaliers. To march forward, then, appeared to me to be our bounden duty, without suffering a moment's delay to snatch from us the golden boon of opportunity. I urged, I remonstrated, I entreated; while he walked on as calmly as if I had been talking of antique Rome. At length

I lost patience, I spoke with heat and passion ; and gave Frank the advantage of my intemperance.

“ Sir,” he replied at length, after he had heard me with a degree of irritating silence, which provoked me still more ; “ Sir, you are my brother, and therefore I do not punish you as your insolence deserves ; but as your commanding officer, I order you to be silent.”

“ Well, Frank, well,” replied I, “ my patience may last till twelve o’clock ; but if we do not march at that hour, I may be tempted to do, what both you and I may regret.”

He made no reply, but entered the house ; and I could see by the light which stood in the hall, that he was as pale as death. Day was now beginning to break, and hurrying back to the village, I took care that William Fells should get repose and attendance, and then busied myself, till the usual hour of breakfast returned, in all the little details which every man may find in plenty to occupy spare minutes. I then went back once more to the mansion-house, where, I found my brother alone in the eating-hall, gazing thoughtfully from the

window. Shortly after I had entered, a servant announced that Lady Eleanor, finding herself somewhat indisposed, had not yet risen; but begged that her guests would not wait for her, but would excuse her absence from their morning meal.

Frank coloured and then turned pale; and sitting down to table, the breakfast passed in almost total silence. Lady Eleanor appeared as we were about to rise; and it was evident that she had been weeping long and bitterly. though many an after effort had been used to efface the traces of that sad employment. We were all under considerable embarrassment, and the only question asked was, when Lady Eleanor's sweet voice demanded—hesitating as it struggled with tears—when the march of the regiment was to take place, as she feared by the movements she had heard, that it was ordered early.

My brother replied, that it certainly would not proceed till after midday. It wanted but a few brief hours to that time; but even the certainty of those short hours seemed a relief to our too captivating entertainer; and

as soon as I could do so politely, I left them to themselves, and after wandering some time through the park, went back to the village, and wasted away there the time till noon.

During these moments of meditation, I blamed myself somewhat severely for my conduct to Frank in the morning; and though determined, if he still lingered with Lady Eleanor, to take a decided part myself, and join Lord Goring, I at the same time resolved to speak to him coolly and respectfully, and as far as possible conceal my conviction of the weakness which actuated his delay.

I now suffered noon and half an hour more to go by, in hopes of the messenger's return; but at the end of that time, I turned my steps back to the house. Its beautiful mistress was sitting beneath one of the large trees on the lawn, playing idly, but gracefully, with some of the green branches that drooped within her reach; while Frank, stretched on the grass at her feet, raised his eyes to hers as they conversed, and seemed drawing life and spirit from those dark orbs alone. Doffing my hat to the lady as I approached, I reported to my brother, in as

few words as possible, that the expected messenger had not come.

“ Well, then, we must wait till he does,” was all the reply he thought fit to make.

“ I am sorry that you think so, Colonel Masterton,” I answered, “ for you cannot but be aware that every moment lost in the present state of the King’s affairs, is perilous in the extreme ; that Lord Goring himself enjoined all speed upon our march, and that he is even now probably struggling in vain with a superior enemy, because the reinforcements which ought to arrive —”

“ Sir, do you dare to dispute my commands ?” cried my brother, starting suddenly upon his feet, with his face glowing like fire. “ By heaven, if you presume to show any more of this insubordinate spirit, I will chastise you as I would the lowest trooper in the regiment.”

There was a vehemence in his gesture, a fury in his eyes, a loudness in his tone, that seemed scarcely sane. His whole nature appeared changed, and I almost feared his passion would have carried him to the extreme of striking me.

It luckily happened, however, that his intemperance was remarked by one to whom he appeared to have transferred that command which he once had possessed over himself.

“Frank! Frank! for God’s sake cease,” cried Lady Eleanor, forgetting all reserve in her alarm, and laying her hand upon his arm, “If you love me, use not such language towards your brother.—Nay, Colonel Masterton, do I plead in vain?” she added, seeing him about to speak again.

“Not so, dear Lady,” he replied; “I was but about to give an order to the captain of the third troop.—Captain Masterton,” he proceeded sternly, “you will be so good, as with all diligence to reconnoitre the country between this place and Wrotham, and particularly between Ditton and Malling. Gain what intelligence you can; and when you have done so, report your return with all speed. Let me not be disobeyed.”

My determination was now taken; and farther discussion seemed to be perfectly vain. The commands which I had received, it was clear, were given by my brother only as a means

of employing me elsewhere, and of covering the real motives of fresh delay—delay which might bring upon his character, as a gentleman and a soldier, reproaches which no after conduct would ever wipe out. I could have wept for his weakness, for his infatuation, for his loss of honour ; but I felt that I had a superior duty to perform ; and I resolved to execute it. I accordingly retired in silence, and ordering out my troop, proceeded directly towards Wrotham, near which place, William Fells had ascertained that Lord Goring was quartered. It was farther, however, than I thought to find it, and about four o'clock, we reached a hill from which we could see a considerable way over the country beyond.

A grove of large trees at about two miles distance, covered a considerable space of ground upon the direct road, and shut out the village towards which we were wending. Before us, crowning the hill, was a small farm-house with its innumerable sheds and court-yards, its ploughshares lying in summer idleness about the doors, and the patriarchal cock strutting and scratching on the customary dunghill.

Notwithstanding the rural dirt, which is in fact no dirt, there was an air of great comfort and neatness and repose about the place ; and, pausing to refresh our horses, I purchased a cask of beer for the men, and sat and contemplated the calm, rich valleys before me, looking as quiet and as peaceful as if they had never been trod by the iron step of war. The good man of the house told me that Lord Goring had held his head-quarters near Wrotham for two days ; and it was supposed, would march for Maidstone early the next morning ; but he could give me no account of his numbers, although he said that the cavaliers mustered pretty strong, and neither Fairfax nor Skippon had made any fresh movements against them.

I listened to his words rather idly ; and remained sitting calmly on the shafts of one of the carts, letting my eye stray into this valley and that dell, as they lay in a sunshiny mistiness beneath my glance, and fancying a thousand little quiet, tranquil, sequestered nooks, in the shelter of their bosoms, where the harsh and eager world was only known by hearsay. As I continued to gaze upon the prospect, the sun-

beams were suddenly reflected from one particular point, by some bright substance ; and gradually a number of brilliant lines were seen proceeding in regular array, along what appeared to be a narrow lane. That they were not cuirasses was evident, from the size ; and, concluding them to be the pike-heads of some regiment of infantry marching down to join the royal forces, I sat calmly waiting till the horses were rested. Before long, I lost sight of the gleam as the pikemen wound onwards ; and the prospect resumed its sleepy tranquillity. A minute or two after, however, I heard the report of a cannon, and then another, succeeded by a sharp but desultory discharge of fire-arms, which left no doubt that an engagement of some kind was taking place beyond the grove of trees which obstructed my sight.

In that direction lay Wrotham and the forces of Lord Norwich ; and I could not doubt that whether the troops I had just seen were friends or enemies, an attack had been made upon his quarters. Such a moment was not to be lost ; and, with a beating heart, full of eagerness mingled with agitation, I called the troopers to

mount, and galloped down as fast as my horse would carry me towards the right hand side of the grove. I do not think we were five minutes in reaching the turn of the wood, which was encircled by the high wall of some gentleman's park, of which it formed a part. My troop, I cannot but own, was in some disarray by this time, from the rapidity of our advance ; and I paused for a moment to put the men in order, while the mingled sound of musketry, and human voices, and charging cavalry, came loud and close upon the ear ; and two or three masterless horses passed us with wild speed.

I then drew out from behind the wall ; and in a moment, the strange and fearful sight of a field of battle was all before my eyes. The whole for a moment appeared smoke and confusion. Handfuls of horse were scattered disjointed over a wide piece of common ground ; and a number of men on foot were evidently flying over the hill. In the mean while the roar of artillery came from a small battery planted on the slope in front of some cottages, whose white faces I could scarcely see for the smoke ;

and near the same spot appeared a group of horsemen, one of whom had his hand extended towards the centre of the field, where the most serious struggle of the day was going on. At that point a large dark body of pikemen were advancing with a steady unshaken front towards the artillery I have mentioned, notwithstanding the repeated charges of a gallant regiment of cavalry, who twice within my sight hurled themselves upon the pikes, and were driven back with the loss of some of their number, who were instantly trodden under foot by the still advancing infantry.

I saw at once by their brighter dresses and fluttering scarfs, that the cavalry in that part of the field belonged to the royal forces; they evidently also made no impression on the parliamentary infantry; and, though inexperienced enough in the art of war, I felt that the only chance of breaking that long deep line of pikes, would be gained by a charge upon their flank, which our position just commanded. We were about three hundred yards from them. We mustered but ninety-seven men; but the sight of the energetic strife before us,—the

animating outcry of the fight,—and the impatience which had gathered in our bosoms under a long and irritating delay, were all in our favour. At the very moment I saw the royalist cavalry once more rallying for the charge, I too gave the word to my men ; and, dashing down upon the enemy's flank, in a compact mass, shouting loudly, “ God and the King ! ” we were in an instant—almost before I knew it—in the very heart of the Parliament's infantry. We had cut our way through, literally like a cannon shot. The third and fourth rank of pikemen were all in disorder ; the second rank turned upon the enemies whom they found so unexpectedly in their rear ; the first gave way before the renewed charge of the cavaliers in front ; and, as the spell of their previous success had been their union and firm order, the moment their ranks were broken they began to fly. Fear, the most infectious of all diseases, spread amongst them, and they dispersed in every direction long before the chances of the day had really gone against them.

This I beheld after I rose, for one grim

fellow had stopped me in career, as I was urging on my horse still farther into their ranks, by burying his pike in my poor charger's poitral. I struck at him as I fell, but could not reach him; and he was just preparing the same fate for me which had befallen poor Sorel, when the front line was broken by the cavaliers, and he was shot dead by a pistol ball. Unable to follow the pursuit, I stood and gazed around me, in hopes of seeing some unappropriated horse which might put me again at the head of my men, who had passed on some way before me.

The royalists were now rallying all around, and it appeared to me that I could now distinguish on the field several more regiments than I had seen at first. The group of officers on the hill were also, by this time, advancing along the field; and one of them, a middle-aged hale-looking man, with quick, keen eyes, and a firm determined mouth, rode up to me with the somewhat mixed exclamation of,

“Who the devil are you, Sir? that come in here to win a battle you have nothing to do with? Cods fish! the person that made

that charge on the flank of the rebels, ought scarcely to be unknown to me. Who the devil are you, Sir ; for I have forgot your phiz ?”

“ My name is Masterton, Sir,” I replied ; “ I came up to the field by accident at a fortunate moment.”

“ And of that fortunate moment you made a skilful and gallant use,” replied the officer, more seriously. “ Let me tell you, Sir, that they are happy men to whom such accidents happen. But how is it, Colonel Masterton ? I expected to see an older man and more soldiers !”

“ You mistake me for my brother, Sir, I perceive,” was my reply. “ I am but Colonel Masterton’s younger brother, to whom, if, as I suspect, you be Lord Norwich, you sent a commission as Captain of a troop of horse.”

“ Oons ! man, and where is your brother then ?” demanded the General. Where is his regiment ? Why is he not here at the hour of need ? But we must speak of all this hereafter. There, mount that horse, my young gallant ! Gather your troop together, and follow that road to the right ; keep the pikemen

who have fled that way, from forming again on our flank. But go no farther than the mill," he added, hallooing after me. "Go no farther than the mill, then come back to Wrotham and report yourself."

He then turned to give other orders for the pursuit; and obeying his commands, I followed the road to the right. About a hundred yards from the common, I found a considerable body of the enemy already beginning to rally; but they had just been defeated—we had just been victorious; and dashing at once in amongst them, we again dispersed them over the hedges and through the fields, cutting down a number, who were either bold enough to resist or too slow to escape. We saw many, too, of the unhappy wretches flying here and there, several of them desperately wounded, and some of them with scarcely sufficient strength to totter on. My troopers, whose fresh taste of blood had done but little service to their humanity, would fain have terminated the sufferings of those poor fugitives in the most summary manner; but with some trouble, I compelled them to refrain; and after pursuing our way to the mill

uninterrupted, we returned by the same road, and sought the little village, near which I had seen the artillery of the royal force.

Not knowing where to quarter my men, I drew them up by the side of the green, and went on foot to seek Lord Goring. A crowd of officers and soldiers near one particular cottage directed me to him, and entering at once the little room in which he was, I found him sitting with two or three other gentlemen—all just as they left the field—at an oaken table, on which was a large piece of roast meat and a salad. A number of people stood about him receiving orders; and his dinner was continually interrupted by the necessity of laying down his knife to sign various papers, or point out various movements, on a map that lay beside him.

Several of these affairs were thus transacted before his eye fell upon me; but when it did so he exclaimed, “Well, Master Harry Masterton, I owe you more thanks than I had time to pay you this morning, for your good help in the hour of need; and I now call these gentlemen to witness how high I hold your con-

duct ; for under God—and I am no fanatic to say to Him belongs the first word of thanks—” and he reverently touched his hat. “ But as I was saying, under God, the success of to-day’s skirmish is mainly attributable to you. Remark, the forces I expected not having joined me, I had but fifteen hundred men on the field, and had my position here been forced, I should have lost my communication with Hales and the rest ; and probably we might never have been able to have effected our junction. This gives greater importance to this affair than the mere business of the skirmish itself, which, as I said before, was as successful as it has been alone, I believe, through your fortunately coming up on the enemy’s flank, seeing the precise moment when a charge could be effective, and executing gallantly what was judiciously devised. Gentlemen cavaliers, who have served the King so often, do not think I imply blame to you by my praise of this young soldier. I do not believe there is one of you but would have done the same, had you been placed as he was, and as you were, you acted as well as men could act ; and you, Sir, think it sufficient honour

that I say you have behaved as well as the oldest, and best servants of his Majesty could have done, had they been placed in your situation."

It may be easily supposed what I felt at such a public address from the commander-in-chief, and my pleasure would have been unmixed and overflowing, had I not feared that he would every moment ask me in the same public way the cause of my brother's absence. But something in my manner, I know not what, had shewn to his keen eye that all was not quite right in those respects; and with a delicacy of feeling which I could not have expected from his general reputation, his habits, or the circumstances of the moment, he refrained from questioning me farther till he could do so in private.

I stood for some time, however, in momentary expectation of having some inquiry put to me, for which, Heaven knows, I had no answer ready; and I contrived in a very few minutes to torture myself with imaginary interrogations and replies, far more painfully than if what is emphatically called *the question* had been

really applied to me. Lord Norwich, however, seemed to have forgotten all about my brother, but at length, calling me nearer to him, he demanded what I had done with my troopers; and being informed that I had left them drawn up without till I had waited upon him, he directed me to speak with the quarter-master of his own regiment, concerning the disposal of them for the night. He then added, in a low tone, "Return in an hour, young gentleman; you will then find me alone, and I would have some more conversation with you."

Glad to escape, I proceeded to find out the officer to whom he referred me; and having made all the necessary arrangements, inspected the troop, and ascertained the amount of our loss in killed and wounded, which was comparatively small, I superintended the bringing in of two of our wounded companions who had remained upon the field, and then turned towards the village again.

I had mingled in the fray; I had aided in the bloodshed; with all my small power, I had edged the sword of the destroying angel; and during the whole, I had felt very little after the

first moment, but the eagerness with which a boy pursues a butterfly or a bird ; yet as I again passed over the field, and had in one place to pick my way between five or six naked corpses, which some fiends of women had already stripped and left glaring with their gashes in the evening sunset ; I own a chill feeling of horror came over me, and I could not but comment sadly on the bloody work in which I had been so ardently engaged.

Was it glory ? I asked myself, to make such things as that ? Was he the most honourable who could devise the quickest means of changing the godlike human form, with all the mighty beauty of life and energy, to the cold, meaningless, leaden things, that lay cumbering the bloody earth, over which they had lately moved in hope and expectation ? But, alas ! glory and honour, and all the wishes, desires, and pleasures, which man dignifies with fine or tuneful names, will but few of them bear the microscope.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hour was just expired when I again turned to Lord Goring's quarters, which in fact consisted of a mere cottage. He was not yet alone, but his present occupation seemed only the discussion of a bottle of strong waters, with a gentleman who sat near him; and who, the moment after, rose and left the chamber, while the General with his own hand restored the spirits to a nook in a corner cupboard, from which the bottle had been withdrawn.

"Sit, young gentleman," he said, as soon as we were alone, "sit and let me hear why, instead of sending a single troop, your brother did not bring down the whole regiment he had commission to raise. I would not speak with

you publicly on a matter where I may have to speak harshly."

"My brother, my Lord," I replied, "waited your Lordship's orders. Two messengers have been sent you from Penford-bourne."

"None have reached me, Sir," he answered, hastily; "None have reached me. Orders!—oons! Sir, had he not orders to join me with all speed?"

"Till this morning, my lord," I said in reply, "he did not know the position of your Lordship's forces."

"Then why did he not come when he did know it?" demanded Lord Norwich, vehemently. "Sir, there is something more in this! I have heard of a regiment being quartered for three days or more at Penford-bourne, while the commanding officer revelled at the house of a certain fair widow—or wife—or something—ha, Sir! Is your brother a coward?"

"My family, in general, does not produce such things," I replied, reddening; and he instantly added:

"No, no, I do not suppose it does. But

what am I to think, young gentleman? Here, your brother with orders to make all speed and join me without delay, halts for three days within fifteen or sixteen miles of my headquarters, leaves me to be attacked—ay and nearly defeated by the rebels, and sends me but the succour of an hundred men. Sir, the very fact of his sending you was either an insult to himself or to me. If you could come, he could come.”

“Nay, Sir,” I answered, “my brother did not contemplate my joining you. He sent me out to reconnoitre, and hearing the firing, I came down to be of what poor service I could.”

“What, then, I have not to thank him even for your presence?” cried the general. “’Tis well! ’tis mighty well! Reconnoitre, Sir! In three days time he should have been as fully acquainted with the whole country round him, as I am with the surface of that table. Reconnoitre! Did he always send out a whole troop to reconnoitre for three days, before he moved the regiment fifteen miles. Sir, what is the meaning of all this? I charge you on your

honour, tell me why your brother has delayed his march?"

"I can but state his motives, my Lord, as they were stated to me," I answered.

"Pshaw!" he cried, interrupting me; "Is your brother tampering with the rebels? Is he waiting to see which party will be victorious? Is he afraid, or disaffected, stupid, or idle? In any case, Sir, he is unworthy and unfit to hold the command he does; and by virtue of the authority reposed in my hands by his Majesty, I am determined to supersede him."

"Nay, my Lord, nay," I exclaimed, seeing the imputation likely to fall upon Frank, worse than even the truth could have made it. "For God's sake, do not on the same day you honour me by your thanks for a good service, do a thing that must blast the character of my brother for ever."

"Each line of conduct, Sir, must have its reward," replied Lord Norwich, sternly. "You have acted well, with skill, coolness, and courage, such as we seldom see in a man's first field; and I have thanked, and would reward you, were there any means of doing so. But

your brother has neglected his duty, if not betrayed his trust, and he too must have his reward."

"Then, my Lord," I interposed, somewhat too boldly perhaps, "let both our rewards be in words. You thank me, and I am more than sufficiently paid. Reprimand my brother if you please, and he will be more than sufficiently punished."

"More than sufficiently, Sir !" exclaimed Lord Norwich, striding up and down the room ; "I tell you, Sir, that in times like these, when activity and zeal are every thing, if I were to have your brother out, and shoot him on the green, he would not be *more than sufficiently* punished."

"Indeed, my Lord," I ventured to reply, "Frank is more to be pitied than blamed in the present case. He has been, I believe, deceived by false information, and certainly is entangled in a way that he finds it difficult to break through—"

"Where, Sir ? How ?" demanded the General, whose whole mind was full of military matters alone. "How is he entangled ? Show

me what enemy opposes his march. Sir, there is not a corps between him and me, as you yourself well know. What enemy entangles him, Sir? say !”

“No enemy, my Lord, but pretended friends,” I replied, “who, working on his mind by means of his affections, do not give his judgment fair play. Indeed, my Lord, I would answer for it, that if he could but be got away from the place where he is now, he would prove one of the best officers under your command.”

The moment I had spoken, I regretted what I had said, fearful that my words might draw on inquiries which I could neither answer with honour, nor refuse to answer without suspicion; but as very frequently happens, my reply, in its very incautiousness, produced a better effect than more studied sentences might perhaps have done.

“Ay ! ay !” exclaimed the General, with a grim smile, as if a new light had suddenly broken in upon him. “Ay ! ay ! I understand you now. A woman is it? Damn them all ! they have ruined more soldiers than enough. Women and wine, Sir ! women and wine ! they

have done more to defeat King Charles's armies than all the Fairfaxes, or Skippons, or Cromwells, that ever were born. Women and wine, Sir ! women and wine !" and at those ominous words, he shook his head with a melancholy frown.

I would willingly have explained to Lord Norwich, that the feelings which detained my brother from his duty, though equally blameable in their effects, were not of the coarse nature which he seemed to suppose ; but, without giving a moment's attention, he cut sharp across me, returning, as was his custom apparently, to his own particular train of ideas.

"Nevertheless," continued he, "the King's service, Sir, must not be neglected for any such toys ; and the breach of duty in your brother is not the less culpable, whatever may be its cause. However, Sir, a sort of fellow feeling for your brother's situation makes me give him one chance, as well as the pleasure of showing how much I esteem your conduct this day. My intention is, Sir, to supersede your brother, and name you to the command."

I started at this sudden announcement, and

was about to remonstrate, but he stopped me, exclaiming in a sharp voice, "Do not interrupt me, Sir, I have let you talk too much already. You shall put your new commission in your pocket; and, as you seem to think Colonel Masterton may behave better if removed from his present quarters, you shall use every means of persuasion you think fit, to make him march the regiment instantly. If he comply, you may burn the supersedure; but if he neglect or refuse, you have my orders to take the command instantly, and lead your troopers to meet me at Maidstone. Let me see! Hales joins to-morrow morning at four: we march at nine. As you have a long route before you, I give you till the day after to-morrow at eight in the morning, to be at the little green in front of the Bush ale-house out of Maidstone gates. There halt and wait for orders. If you do not receive them in an hour, gain what information you can, and make all speed to join me wherever I may be. But mark me! Do not let your fellows drink, for we shall have sharp work before that day be over, I doubt. Fairfax is pur-

suing me with all speed; but with your regiment, and the other reinforcements, I doubt not we may stand against him by that time. Now, Sir, good night! Be ready to set out at four to-morrow morning, before which hour you shall have the papers I mentioned."

His tone implied that no reply must be made; and I accordingly bowed and left the room in silence. At the door of the cottage I met a crowd of young cavaliers, by whom I was instantly surrounded, and with many a greeting and welcome, and various expressions of thanks for my assistance that day, I was dragged away, not unwillingly, to supper. Since an early hour of the morning I had tasted nothing, and therefore did ample justice to the viands set before me; but I soon found that many a midnight bowl was likely to follow the more solid affair of eating, and my whole object became to escape from the carousal that was about to commence. We were twenty persons in a little low-roofed room, whose dingy rafters bespoke centuries of smoke and uncleanness; and the smell of various liquors, from rum to aqua

vitæ, as well as the roar of various voices shouting toasts, singing songs, and swearing oaths, was perfectly overpowering.

After drinking several toasts, amongst which I only remember "Hellfire for Fairfax, and damnation to Oliver's nose," I was allowed to make my exit, on the plea of having ridden far before the skirmish, as well as fought hard in it; and finding my way to the barn in which my men were quartered, I lay down in the loft and fell sound asleep. The next morning, by the gray of the dawn, Sir George Warrel's trumpets, as he brought up his large reinforcements, wakened me from my slumber; and in a few minutes my troop were on horseback and ready to set out. About a quarter of an hour after, an officer delivered to me a sealed packet from Lord Goring, addressed, "To the hands of the Honourable Master Harry Masterton," and containing in writing the directions which had been given me the night before signed by the Earl. The moment I received it, I put the troop in motion, and once more returned towards Penford-bourne.

The situation in which I was placed was as

painful as can be well conceived, although it gave me the only chance of forcing Frank to do his duty and redeem his honour, by breaking through the snares with which he was enthralled, and by now acting vigorously in the service of the King. The method, however, in which I was to proceed was the question. I knew my own impatience of disposition on the one hand, and his inclination to arbitrary measures on the other, too well to doubt that the very fact of my having joined Lord Goring and been absent the whole day, would be a cause of quarrel between us, which might heat and irritate us both, before we came to the more important consideration of hurrying our march to Maidstone. Nevertheless, I felt pretty sure that, bearing to Frank the express commands of the General-in-chief, I should be able to prevail on him to obey them; and I resolved to master my own temper as far as possible in the discussion, that he might find no excuse for neglecting the orders, in the conduct of the person who bore them. At the same time, I determined to act as warily towards him as the circumstances permitted; and while I gave him Lord Norwich's

commands to proceed to Maidstone, not to name even his supersedure but on the last necessity.

While these thoughts were passing through my brain, and working themselves into resolutions, a horseman suddenly crossed the road, along which we were travelling. As soon as he saw us, he drew in his bridle, and paused for a moment to look at the troop as it approached. He seemed to hesitate whether he should go on or turn; but the moment after he rode up to me, saying, "I give you good morrow, Captain Masterton," and I recognized the companion of our march to Penford-bourne, Walter Dixon.

My resolution was instantly taken, though perhaps it was a somewhat rash one, and I replied, "Good morrow, Master Dixon; you are doubtless coming to join us at Penford-bourne. We will ride thither together. I am just returning from Wrotham."

"I will go part of the way," replied he, "but I cannot go the whole, for I have business at Ashford, before I join you finally. What news from Wrotham? How does Goring get on? He makes a stand, I find."

“Nay, nay, you must ride on with me,” I rejoined. “My brother will be so glad to see you;” and as I spoke, I made a sign, as privately as possible, for those who were behind to ride up.

“I cannot, indeed,” he replied. “Business of a particular kind will compel me to leave you about a mile hence; but I will ride so far with you, and you shall tell me the news.”

“Your riding must not stop there, Master Walter Dixon,” I replied, spurring forward my horse, and catching him by the collar, “you must with me to Penford-bourne, whatever business you have at Ashford.”

“How now, Sir!” he exclaimed, attempting to draw his sword. “Who dares lay hands upon me?” But by this time the two headmost men of the file were upon him, and resistance was in vain.

“What mad suspicion has crossed your brain now, Sir?” he demanded angrily. “Methought you had laid aside all those wild caprices at Amesbury. Do you jest, Sir? or are you serious? Pray of what am I accused now?”

“I am perfectly serious, Master Dixon,” I

replied ; “ and as to what you are accused of, you shall hear a part in that meadow, where I intend to halt for half an hour. Look well to your prisoner, Corporal ; and rather shoot him than let him escape.”

So saying, I rode on, and halted the troop for a little rest, in one of the fine green fields that skirt along the windings of the Stoure. There I called William Fells to my side, and, while the prisoner was kept at a distance, bade him endeavour to remember any thing he had overheard Walter Dixon say, while he had been in the hands of the Fanatics. What he had heard, he replied, consisted alone of detached sentences ; but of these he repeated to me several ; and having ordered the prisoner to be brought before me, I said to him :

“ Master Walter Dixon ; my servant, William Fells—whom you now see, not for the first time—declares that he has overheard from your lips a base plot for betraying the trust my brother placed in you, and for detaining him at Penford-bourne, till his own honour and the opportunity of serving the King were lost together. This may be all a mistake, but you

will be good enough just to pronounce a few sentences in his presence, that he may judge better of the voice. Will you have the kindness to repeat after me these words," and fixing my eyes intently upon his countenance, I added one of the scraps with which William had furnished me. It was to the following effect: "So, he replied that they were at their wits' end, for they could not detach a sufficient force to keep him in check, while they threw forward three regiments upon Wrotham; and I told him in reply, that if they would give me the lands, I would undertake to keep him three days longer where he was. But he said that he could not undertake it—that the council must judge: and then I said I would do nothing more, for notwithstanding all I had done—prevented him from joining Goring, and given them the opportunity of cutting his regiment to pieces—the council neither seconded the design, nor seemed inclined to grant me the lands."

William Fells' excellent memory had enabled him to retain this disjointed speech very perfectly; and when he repeated it to me, he persisted in declaring that Walter Dixon, and none other had

spoken it. To my surprise, however, my prisoner went over it, without a change of countenance that I could discover, although I kept my eyes upon him, both with the intention of catching any effect it might produce, and of increasing his confusion if he were really guilty. He made me reiterate various parts more than once, as if he did not remember the whole ; and when he had done, he calmly demanded if it was alone from some fancied resemblance, reported by a servant, between his voice and that of another person, whom the servant even had never seen, that I thought fit to stop a gentleman on the highway, and accuse a person, who on one occasion had guided me clear of an enemy, that would have destroyed both me and mine but for his interference ?

He spoke with something between sneer and reproach in his tone, and certainly there never was a more artful piece of acting than that which he displayed upon the occasion ; but, remembering what I had heard myself at the hill, I replied, that it was not on such circumstances alone that I accused him ; for that plenty of other proof existed against him, as he would

find hereafter. Resolving to try him a little farther, I then ordered the regiment to horse, pretending to be surprised at the lateness of the hour; and observing aloud to William Fells, that if we did not make haste, we should not arrive before the execution of Gabriel Jones. This I said with my back towards the prisoner; but turning sharply round, the moment it had passed my lips, I saw him become first deadly pale, and then as crimson as my sword-knot. So far my suspicions were confirmed; and I resolved, even if I could prove nothing against Master Walter Dixon, to keep him, at all risks, so securely, that he could betray us no farther than he had done.

The troop now marched forward; and without accident or interruption we arrived at Penford-bourne. My brother was not with the regiment, and the news that he had not set his foot in the village that day, evidently showed that his infatuation and indifference had increased, rather than diminished, during our absence.

Leaving Walter Dixon well guarded, and with strict orders to the sentries to allow no one

speech of him, I proceeded to the mansion-house ; but there also I was disappointed in my search. Frank had ridden out with Lady Eleanor ; and I dismounted to wait his return ; but finding that I was only irritating myself, as I sat alone, with the expectation of what was to ensue, and was getting up in my own imagination, a variety of angry observations for my brother, and angry replies for myself, which only prepared my mind to be irascible and petulant ; I very soon mounted a fresh horse, and rode out to seek the party. I met the whole cortège not a hundred yards from the park gates : Frank evidently in high spirits, and the Lady all that was gay and lovely. I could not but perceive that my coming overshadowed the brightness of the morning to them both. Lady Eleanor drew a deep sigh, but welcomed me courteously. My brother's brow gathered into a frown ; and remarking upon my absence from quarters the night before, he trusted, he said, that I had some good cause to assign for not returning.

I replied that I had ; and would communi-

cate it to him at leisure ; and turning my horse's head, I accompanied the cavalcade in its return.

Scarcely had we entered the gates, and turned into one of the long deep avenues which was skirted on the right hand by a mass of broken copsewood, when a man, evidently a gentleman, habited in black, crossed the avenue ; and without taking any notice apparently of our party, entered the copse. Lady Eleanor drew in her horse with such a sudden recoil, as almost to throw him on his haunches.

“What is the matter ?” exclaimed Frank, who had not seen the figure. “You are ill, Ellen. How deadly pale you look. For Heaven's sake, what is the matter ?”

“Nothing ! nothing !” replied she hastily ; and seeing me about to enter the copse after the intruder, she added : “Do not ! do not, for God's sake. I know who it is.”

“Who what is ?” demanded my brother. “I saw no one but ourselves.”

“Oh it was but the Forester,” she replied. “But he came across me so suddenly, he made me start. Let us proceed, gentlemen.”

We accordingly moved on, Frank satisfied that it was the Forester who had caused the Lady's sudden start ; and I equally convinced that it was not. Lady Eleanor, however, did not recover her composure completely ; and though she spoke of various subjects as we rode forward, strove for cheerfulness, and even for mirth,—her conversation was broken, her answers wandered from the point, and her gaiety was evidently the effort of a heart ill at rest, to cover the cause of its disturbance. As we approached the house, she complained of fatigue ; and on dismounting, retired to her own apartment.

on

CHAPTER X.

FRANK, with a step of slow deliberation, proceeded to the apartment in which Lady Eleanor usually sat. What was in his thoughts I know not—whether he felt that he could scarcely blame me for a breach of duty, when he himself was neglecting his own ; or whether his whole mind was occupied with her who had just left us, and the idea of his military command came across him but as a brief and troublesome memory to be banished as soon as possible, I cannot tell. However, he sauntered into the room, with deep thought written in his eyes, but with listless indifference in his walk and manner. He said nothing concerning my prolonged absence ; but, advancing towards the windows, took up a book which Lady Eleanor

had been reading, laid it down again, after a brief and casual glance; raised her lute from the cushions on which it rested, ran his hand over the strings, drawing forth some discordant notes, and then replaced it where he found it; and at length turning to the window, he gazed out for a moment or two in silence. I was silent also, and stood watching his movements, with mingled feelings of pain and impatience. In a few minutes he turned; and, as if he felt it absolutely necessary to say something, he asked, "Well, Harry! have you reconnoitred the country between this and Wrotham?" speaking in a very different tone from that which he had used in the first irritation of my importunate return.

"I have, Frank," I replied, "and have to inform you, on that head, that there is not the slightest appearance of any enemy from this place to the head-quarters of Lord Norwich." At the latter words of my reply he started, and turning very red, demanded,

"Then did you visit Lord Goring's quarters? Did you see Lord Goring, Sir? How came you to disobey your orders? I bade you reconnoitre the country, not proceed to the army!"

“To reconnoitre the country between this and Wrotham, were the commands I received,” was my reply: “in doing so, I found Lord Goring attacked in position by the forces of the rebels, and of course yielded him that aid and assistance which as a servant of his Majesty I was bound to do.”

“You have disobeyed my orders, Sir !” cried he, drawing nearer to me, with a countenance in which anger, and agitation, and shame, were strangely mingled,—“you have disobeyed my orders ! What did Lord Goring say ? What part had you in the action ? When did it take place ? What questions did he ask ? How was your troop ?”—

How many more interrogatories he would have addressed to me, I do not know, had not a servant entered, and presented a billet, which he said had been left for Colonel Masterton by a stranger, who stayed not a moment at the door. At first, Frank scarcely noticed either the servant or the note that had been given him ; but the lackey, seeing that in his agitation he was twisting the paper to pieces, ventured to turn back and tell him farther, that

the stranger had been very particular in directing that it should be delivered immediately, and *with care*. My brother then opened it, and ran his eye over the contents,—he paused,—read it again more attentively, muttering to himself,—“ Well ! mighty well ! If that may settle it ! So !—Now, Sir,” he continued, turning once more towards me with a cooler, but a still sterner air, “ Now, Sir, what said Lord Norwich ?”

“ He blamed highly our delay at this place,” replied I ; “ he said it was unnecessary, inexcusable, and wrong in every sense of the word,”—

“ That he and I will settle when we meet,” interrupted Frank ; “ doubtless, according to your showing, Sir, my conduct might be wrong and inexcusable.”

“ You do not do me justice, Frank,” I answered ; “ you do not indeed. I gave your own motives to Lord Goring, as you had given them to me. I did all I could to shield your honour and your character from suspicion, if not direct accusation.”

“ Who dared impugn my honour and my character, Sir ?” demanded he, his eyes every

moment flashing more brightly, and his cheek growing redder and more red: "Who dare suspect me of any thing dishonourable?"

"Your Commander-in-chief, Frank Masterton!" I answered, becoming somewhat heated in my turn: "He said that he heard you had been here three days; that in three days you should have known every rood of the country round you; that your orders were precise to join him without delay; and that want of zeal and activity in the present case was a worse crime than even cowardice. He said, moreover, that you had left him to be attacked through utter negligence or treachery; ay, and to be defeated also, as he would have been, he owned, had not a part of our regiment come up unexpectedly."

"How was that, Sir? Speak! explain!" exclaimed my brother. "Do you mean to say that you,—you, and your handful of troopers, turned the battle in favour of Lord Goring? The royal cause must be at the dregs indeed," he added, with one of his bitter sneers, "if Harry Masterton and fifty men could save the Cavaliers from defeat!"

“A less thing might have done it,” replied I; “and I proceeded to explain to him what had occurred, together with the particulars I had gathered during my stay at Wrotham, concerning the events which had taken place previous to my arrival. I pointed out to him, that Lord Norwich had but fifteen hundred men at the village, and that the parliamentary generals had endeavoured, by forcing his position with three regiments, while they kept the other body of the royalists in check with a superior force, not only to prevent the junction of the two divisions, but to turn the flank of the one near Rochester, and cut them both to pieces in detail. I informed him how far this plan had succeeded, when the fortunate accident of our arrival, not only at the precise moment, but on the precise spot necessary to success, shook the advancing column of infantry, and favoured the last charge of the Cavaliers.

As I proceeded, the countenance of my brother changed; the sentiments of duty, patriotism, and honour, which had been smothered in other feelings, but not extinguished, blazed up again in his bosom; the aspiration for glory and dis-

tion, which all feel or have felt, revived ; the colour came and went in his cheek, with a fitful rapidity, almost equal to the flickering of the summer lightning on the verge of the evening sky ; and as I spoke of strife, and conquest, and success, and triumph, he cast himself down on the cushions, and hid his face in his hands, exclaiming, “ And I not there ! and I not there ! Good God, and I not there ! ”

“ Frank ! ” said I, laying my hand upon his arm, with a firm, but kindly pressure, “ there is a way of retrieving all, if you will but embrace it. I bear you Lord Goring’s orders to march immediately for Maidstone ; he expects you there to meet him by to-morrow morning, at eight o’ the clock, as he intends, if possible, to make a stand there. A general battle must immediately take place ; the former was but a skirmish. March with all speed, command your regiment in the moment of danger and difficulty, and win glory that will render all mistakes forgotten at once.”

The good spirit was awakened, and starting up from the couch, my brother declared he would go, if—he was resolved to go, but—

I feel sure that I could have soon dissolved those *ifs* and *buts*, far more easily than Hamilcar's son reduced the rocks of the Alpine passes. All might have been explained, all might have been remedied, but at that moment Lady Eleanor entered the room, and Frank's good resolves were petrified in a moment. The inferior soul resumed its ascendancy ; the confidence between us was destroyed ; and he felt ashamed, I am sure, at having yielded, even as much as he had done, to the counsels which would have freed him from the mental thralldom that bound him down.

"I fear I interrupt you, gentlemen," said Lady Eleanor, pausing in her advance ; "I fear I break in upon some matter of deep import ;" and her eye glanced from the now animated countenance of my brother to mine, striving to read whether the feelings that sparkled in each were amicable or angry. I was silent ; for I felt that she not only interrupted my discourse, but all my best designs.

Frank, however, replied with a smile, "Not in the least, dearest lady ! not in the least !" and as he spoke he took her hand, and led her to her

seat near the window, adding, "Our conversation will soon be over on important subjects. Harry, I can and will join Lord Norwich to-morrow, but it cannot be by eight o'clock."

"Then you may as well not join him at all, Frank," I answered, somewhat impatiently, as I saw new delays blighting all that I had accomplished. "Lord Goring's orders are, that the regiment be at Maidstone by eight at latest, and they must be obeyed."

Lady Eleanor passed her hand twice across her eyes; and Frank replied, resuming at once the cold, stern tone he had been accustomed to use,

"That, Sir, is my business. The regiment cannot be there by eight,—no, nor by nine."

I was now convinced that all would again be lost, without some great effort to change his determination; and I made one, which nothing but the painful circumstances in which I was placed could justify—which nothing else could have induced me to attempt. Not that that measure was one of thought and calculation. On the contrary, it was one of impulse, the last resource of my mind, in despair of seeing a

brother act as his duty, his honour, and his name required.

“ Lady Eleanor Fleming,” I said, advancing to the spot where that lady sat, with the tears clustered in her beautiful eyes, and scarcely withheld from running over, even by all woman’s habitual command of her own feelings, “ Lady Eleanor Fleming, mine is a hard task. I speak to my brother, who is as dear to me as ever brother was to brother ;—I speak to him as advocate for his own honour, for his own duty.—Do not interrupt me, Frank, for pity’s sake ; for indeed, I would interest a more persuasive voice than mine, to plead the same cause.—Lady, I bear him the direct orders of his Commander-in-chief, to march his regiment a short and easy distance, by a particular hour, in order to share in movements and efforts, on which the safety of the King and the realm depend, as the last stake which can be played for the crown of this country. Speak, Lady, if, as I believe, you hold him dear ; and urge him to the straightforward duty that lies before him. Speak, for the love of Heaven ; for

he is ruining himself, and casting away his honour as a soldier !”

No language can express the bright but beautiful colour that overspread her face, at an appeal which touched, perhaps too boldly, on feelings that I was supposed not to know ; but it was my last hope of influencing my brother by gentle means ; and, as far as engaging her voice also, I was successful, — unexpectedly successful.

“ Colonel Masterton,” she said, with her cheeks still glowing, “ I know not, I cannot imagine, that my voice should have such power as your brother supposes ; but yet, as he has spoken boldly, I will not dissemble ; and, as your interest and your honour *are* dear to me, — most dear, — for both their sakes I advise, I pray you, to obey the orders you have received.”

While she spoke, she fixed her eyes full upon him ; and her words flowed with rapid and energetic eloquence, while her cheeks, her neck, her brow, were all crimson, with feeling and with consciousness ; but the moment she ceased, she

dropped her eyes to the ground—resumed her seat—the colour faded in her cheek—and instead of the eager fire that had but a moment before sparkled in her glance, the tears burst forth, and overflowed the long dark curtain of her eyes.

“Dear Lady,” replied Frank, in a soft but determined tone, “it must not, and it cannot be. I will be responsible to Lord Norwich for my own conduct. As for you, Sir,” he added, turning sternly towards me, “you have taken this day an unwarrantable liberty with me and with this lady; and though, like many other offences, I resent it not, because I am your brother; as your commanding officer, I will not have my commands disputed, or my will cavilled at. Go, Sir, to the regiment. See that all be prepared to march at nine to-morrow.—Answer me not, Sir! for I am at least, Colonel of the regiment, and will be obeyed.”

“The liberty I took with that lady, Frank,” I replied, “was solely, through her persuasion—I may say, her noble and generous counsel, to save you from a far greater pain, that you must now suffer. You are not, as you suppose,

colonel of this regiment ; and, whether you will or not, it marches for Maidstone to-mor-row, at five in the morning."

"How now, Sir? You are mad!" exclaimed he, advancing towards me, with his eyes flashing as if they were full of lightnings. "You are surely become insane! and have lost what little wit you ever possessed!—Or is this mere insubordinate insolence?" he added. "We will soon see whether I am, or am not, colonel of the regiment. Ho! without there." He called from the open window to the sentinel on the steps, "Order up a sergeant's guard with all speed. By Heaven, I will bear with it no longer!"

"You had better calm yourself, Frank Masterton," I replied; "the guard must be turned to other purposes, than that for which you called it.—Yet, one word more, Frank: Will you march to-morrow at five?"

"I will not!" he answered, striking his clenched hand upon the table.

"Well then, Sir," rejoined I, "from George Lord Goring, Earl of Norwich, you received your commission, and from George Lord Gor-

ing I bear you your supersedure ; and, if you follow my advice, you will make the best of your way back to Devonshire ; for, if you fall into the hands of the Roundheads, they will probably shoot you for active loyalty you have too little displayed ; while if you fall into those of Lord Goring, even a brother's intercession, I do not think would save you from death, for treachery that you did not intend to practise."

Frank had turned deadly pale, while he gazed upon the copy of his supersedure which I handed to him ; and I could see the struggle for firmness, which was long going on unsuccessfully in his bosom. At length, however, he mastered his emotion, with a sneer. " This, Sir, is, I suppose, the first-fruits of your fraternal intercession," he said. " It is truly creditable to your heart."

" Oh, Frank !" cried Lady Eleanor, laying her hand tenderly upon his arm, " do not embitter your own feelings and your brother's, by useless taunts. Go with him ! go with him ! in God's name ! Do not I make a sacrifice ?" she added, in a lower voice, whose tone was sunk, not for concealment apparently,—for I could

listinguish every word, but from deep feeling, and the consciousness of much that could not be forgotten. "Do I not sacrifice hope, and joy, and affection, by that very counsel? Do I not give myself up to tears, and memory, and regret?"

"Ellen!" said my brother, pressing her hand in his, "it cannot be! I cannot, and I will not be commanded by a boy,—and that boy a brother, who has wronged me."

"Indeed, indeed, Frank!" I replied, pained and softened by the deep agitation under which I saw him writhe—"Indeed I have not wronged you; nor do I seek to command you, as you fancy: no, not for a moment. Look here! But promise me to march to-morrow at five, and I tear the supersedure at once, resume my place at the head of my troop, and serve under your orders as before. This permission I extorted from Lord Goring, and it was granted as the reward of what I had done in that morning's skirmish. If you will march, the supersedure is at an end. Indeed, Frank, I act from affection, and not from rivalry or ambition."

As I spoke, I laid my hand on his, which was as cold as death. His first impulse was to snatch it hastily from me; but a moment after, he gave it me again, saying, in a tone of deep melancholy, “I believe you, Harry! I believe you after all! I feel I have done you wrong. But it matters not,—I am ruined and undone for ever! My honour and my character are lost, and must be lost! I cannot go!—Do not press me farther; I cannot go. I know the risk and the consequences—but I cannot go. Take the command, Harry! go and gain honour, and glory, and distinguish your name! Fate plays the game against *me*, and I must lose.”

I tried to persuade him to better things. I used every argument, every motive, every reason, that I could devise. Lady Eleanor forgot all; and clung to his arm in tears, beseeching him to obey the orders he had received: but it was in vain. He grasped my hand firm in his. He pressed her to his bosom; and then turned to the door, repeating, “It cannot be! . Where is my servant, I wonder?” he added somewhat wildly. “Where is my servant?”

“I am afraid, Frank,” I said, following him towards the door, “I am afraid, that wherever that villain Gabriel is, it will become my duty to put him under arrest, as there is much reason to believe that he holds private correspondence with the rebels.”

“Do not! do not, Harry!” exclaimed my brother, turning eagerly, and taking both my hands. “Do not, if you love me—I would not for the world—for heaven’s sake do not! Grant me this boon at least, Harry Masterton,” he added, imploringly. “Leave him with me. He is both a villain and a knave, capable of any thing that is base or mean. A slave that I shall some day have cause to shoot through the head; but till that day comes, he must remain with me.”

“Well!” I answered, seeing evidently that the fanatical villain had possessed himself of some of my brother’s secrets, which gave him a dangerous power. “Well! be it as you would, Frank; and believe me—oh believe me, that in all I have done, my first wish has been to shield your honour and to promote your welfare.”

He held my hand as if he were about to

speaking ; but the words failed him ; and, turning away once more, he left the room.

Lady Eleanor still remained wiping the tears from her eyes. When she turned them towards me, the same bright flush came over her cheek, which, within the last two days, had been so familiar with her face ; but I could not help thinking that I saw a degree of gladness there also, which one might very well reconcile, even with Frank's refusal to comply with her entreaties. It was impossible, indeed, to feel angry at her rejoicing that he stayed. She had done far more than I expected, in begging him to go. I felt that in some sort she had acted nobly ; and but small allowance for human weakness was necessary, to pardon the internal joy I was certain that she experienced at the prospect of his remaining by her side, even though his honour called on him to leave it.

I thought, however, that I could not with propriety remain in her house any longer ; and advancing towards the place where she sat, I proceeded to express my sense of the part she had taken in my discussion with my brother.

“ I have to thank you most sincerely, Ma-

dam," I said, "and my gratitude is not at all diminished from having been mingled in some degree with surprise. I acknowledge I did not expect you to second my efforts so zealously as you have done."

Her influence over my brother, and her feelings towards him, had been very little concealed during the whole dispute; but the allusion to it still agitated and confused her.

"You do not know, Sir,—oh you little know what a woman can do," she replied. "But I hope, Captain Masterton," she added hastily, as if willing to say no more on such a theme, "or rather, as I should now call you, Colonel Masterton—"

"Nay, Lady," I interposed, "do not call me by that name. I have no intention of taking that title; and only lead the regiment to its duty as the second in command. I cannot but entertain a hope—a vain one I am afraid—that some fortunate chance may still screen my poor brother from the consequences of his obstinacy. But what were you about to honour me by observing?"

"I was merely going to say," she replied,

“that I hope you will not quit my poor dwelling to-night. Perhaps your brother may change his intentions, perhaps he may be brought to yield. I see,” she added, with a heightening colour—“I see how deep is your affection for him ; I see all that you would willingly sacrifice for his welfare, and I love you for the love you bear him. Stay then, Captain Masterton, stay, and once more join your efforts to mine. I will endeavour—indeed I will endeavour—to shake his determination.”

“I have known him, Lady Eleanor,” I replied, “for many years before you did ; and I am convinced that his determination cannot be moved. I must now retire, to prepare the regiment for its march ; but I will have the honour of waiting upon you before nightfall, both to take my leave, and to hear my brother’s final resolution.”

“Stay yet one moment, Sir,” she said, rising, and laying the long rounded fingers of her beautiful hand upon my arm, with a look full of dignity and fire, though the blush was deeper than ever on her face and neck. “I am about to speak to you for myself, and of myself. You

have shown yourself in every act that I have seen you perform, and by every word that I have heard you speak, a gentleman and a man of honour. Tell me, then, what should such a person do, if a lady's fair fame and reputation were placed in his hands by her confidence in his courtesy, and her efforts to second his noble purpose?"

"Forget, as far as he can, Madam," I replied; "and those things which memory *will* retain, should be for ever, *as if forgotten*."

"Then, Sir, pledge me your honour," she said, earnestly, "that all which has fallen this day from my lips, or from those of your brother concerning me, shall be as you say — *as if forgotten*."

"I do, Madam," I answered; "every thing but your energetic endeavours to make him do his duty."

"You give me your promise?" she asked.

"Most solemnly!" I answered, and bowing over the hand she extended to me, I quitted the apartment and the house. The whole day was spent in making the necessary preparations for leaving the quarters we had occupied so much

too long. As I now wished to detain Master Walter Dixon, without entering into any discussion with him, I did not visit the barn in which he was confined; but took care that he should be supplied with every thing that was necessary to his comfort. The second messenger who had been despatched to Lord Norwich, and whose name, by the way, was Anthony Halt, had been less fortunate than William Fells, and had not returned at all. What became of him I know not, for I never saw him after.

Notwithstanding the evil which our delay was likely to occasion to the royal cause, the regiment itself was recruited by its stay, both in numbers and in condition; and knowing the small force which Lord Goring commanded—small even after the junction of the other forces—I contemplated with pleasure the thoughts of leading him so strong and well appointed a reinforcement.

Such feelings, nevertheless, did not make me at all the less anxious that Frank should be moved from his unhappy resolution, which I knew not whether to attribute to the mad pas-

sion which had acquired such sway over his mind, to the obduracy of determination which he had always displayed, or to some circumstances unknown to myself. I was rather inclined to believe that the latter was in a degree the case, though I doubted not that his insane love for Lady Eleanor made him gladly seize any thing which gave him a fair excuse for remaining near her.

The last effort, however, I was resolved to make; and accordingly returned to the mansion-house late in the evening. It is useless to relate all the particulars of my visit, — the result was the same. Frank was still as immovable as marble; and though Lady Eleanor, drowned in tears, entreated him to go on the path of duty, he continued not only steady to his purpose, but seemed in some degree hurt at her again urging the request, saying that he should certainly stay, if she would extend her hospitality to him one night longer. It was all painful and all fruitless; and, feeling it to be so, I took my departure, leaving, at my brother's request, a guard of twenty men, in the stables belonging to the

house. As I descended the avenue alone, I saw a dark figure cross a distant part of the lawn, and pausing in the moonlight, seem to fix a meditating gaze upon the house. I determined to approach it; but before I could take three steps beyond the shadow of the trees, it was gone; and I could discover no trace of it in the brief space of time that I could afford to the search.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR trumpets sounded to boot and saddle at four o'clock in the morning ; and not long after, we began our march. The world was yet in all its young freshness, and there was a soothing sense of tranquillity in the whole scene, that spread calmly over the heart. The early red of the dawn was still upon a flight of light feathery clouds, that hung upon the zenith ; and the sky looked like the breast of some fairy bird, whose plumage was dappled of azure and pink and gold. The same rosy hue seemed melted in the very air ; and as the slanting sunbeams poured more and more fully upon the world, every object that they touched caught the lustrous tint of morning, while the long blue shadows cast by the horizontal rays, contrasted, yet harmonized, with the light whose

absence gave them existence. There was a sound of wakening through the air too: the matutinal birds, one by one, were bursting into song; and a distant hum told that the busy world of insects had begun their daily labour and delight. The voice of thanksgiving for the bright gift of day, seemed to rise from creation to the gates of Heaven; and every thing, from the diamond dew-drops clustered on the leaves of grass, to the effulgent sky under which they shone, appeared robed in splendour for the morning sacrifice.

The sound of our trumpets was harsh upon my ear; and, with all youth's dreams of glory, I confess I would far rather have enjoyed that calm morning in the woods, or by the sea-side, or on the brow of some wide-looking hill—by myself, or with Emily Langleigh alone—than leading the brightest of mortal hosts to the most glorious of triumphant fields. Oh, how the pomp and the pageantry, the bustle and the display, were rebuked by the sublime glance of the early morning!

I could not but feel melancholy, as I gave the command to march; and the words, “God

“bless ye, Cavaliers !” uttered by some loyal maiden, who stood to see us depart, with four or five other damsels who had risen with the sun for the same purpose, was the first thing that recalled to my mind the justice of the cause in which our swords were drawn, and reconciled me to the thoughts of war, under the reproving voice of the calm scene around.

I had waited for some time after the first trumpets had sounded, with the faint hope that their notes might awake my brother from both his real and figurative sleep ; but he came not, and we were obliged to begin our march. Still, every step I took, I became more and more anxious on his account. “What could I say to Lord Goring ?” I asked myself. “What would be the inevitable consequences of the report I had to make ?” It was sad and terrible to think of, — the blasting of his own fame — the agony it would bring upon his father. The soldiers themselves were evidently already commenting upon the absence of their proper commander ; and, as I rode back towards the rear, to see that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, was safely guarded, I heard the name of the Colonel re-

peated more than once. Calling the captain of the second troop to me, a poor but honourable gentleman in our neighbourhood, I began to speak with him on the subject; and hinted, I am afraid rather insincerely, that business of a particular nature detained my brother behind us.

“Oh, yes, Sir!” he replied, “we all know what the business is; but we almost thought—I beg your pardon for speaking so boldly,—but we almost thought it was a pity you did not prevent him from fighting this duel, for the King’s service surely should not be postponed to a private quarrel.”

“A duel!” I said musing, and taken somewhat by surprise. “How did it get abroad, that he was going to fight a duel?”

“Why, Sir,” replied he, “I forgot you were away at the time; but yesterday hot words were seen to pass between the Colonel and some gentleman in black, by one of the sentinels, in the avenue behind the house; and both laid their hands upon their swords; but some one coming up, they parted. The same person in black, we suppose it was, who came to the village some hours afterwards, and hired a man

to carry a billet to the Colonel. This got about in the regiment, and we never doubted that there was a duel toward, when we found that the Colonel did not command us this morning."

These were tidings indeed; and tidings for which I would have given millions a few hours before. The story was not improbable, and many circumstances which I had remarked, confirmed it. I had myself beheld a stranger in the woods, habited as described in black. No quarrel, it is true, could have taken place between him and Frank after our meeting, but it might have done so before; and the note which I had seen put into my brother's hands, had appeared, from the manner in which he received it, to have been something very interesting, though nothing unexpected. And yet I did not think that for any common affair of the kind,—a thing that might at any time be settled in ten minutes,—Frank would neglect his duty to his King and to his own honour. But then again I remembered how deadly pale Lady Eleanor had turned when she beheld that stranger; and I doubted not that the quarrel had

some reference to her. I concluded, indeed, without much proof, that he was in all probability some rejected lover, and the cause of contention, his pretensions to the lady; and I supposed that some peculiar circumstances, with which I was unacquainted, prevented its hostile discussion an hour or two earlier than the time proposed.

What was to be done, became the next consideration. Had I known before that such a meeting was in agitation, I should have scrupled at no means to compel Frank either to hurry it to a termination before our departure, or to postpone it to some future time. As I came to think farther, it struck me that even then, it was not too late; it wanted still a quarter to six o'clock, and we were within seven miles of Maidstone. My horse was as fresh as the daylight; and I had two led horses with the regiment, to mount me at the moment of need. In two hours and a quarter, I could surely ride twenty-two miles, and do a great deal of business besides. My resolution was instantly taken, and devolving the command on the senior captain, I called out William Fells and another resolute fellow from the ranks, bade them follow me,

and galloped back towards Penford-bourne as hard as I could go. The road was good, and the ground easy, and we flew over it like a passing cloud. In five and thirty minutes we reached the low park wall, at about a mile from the house; and I paused to consider whether my horse could clear it. As I did so, the clashing of swords struck my ear, and I was over in a moment; a turn round the copse wood brought me to the end of a broad green alley, about a hundred yards down which appeared four men, two of whom were deep in eager and desperate conflict, the others stood by, and at the coming of myself and my two followers, a sudden exclamation gave notice that the two lookers-on at least were aware of our approach. I dashed on, resolved at all risks to put a stop to the matter for the time, if for no longer; but before I could reach the spot, in a rapid pass, one of the combatants lunged wide of his mark, reeled back, lost his balance, and fell. The other, followed by one of the two spectators, dashed into the wood, exclaiming, "Not enough yet; we must meet again!" and on arriving on the ground, I found Frank lying on the grass, and bleeding from

two severe wounds which seemed to have been draining him of his heart's blood for long before he fell. A stream of gory drops towards the copse, told that his opponent had not passed unscathed ; and Gabriel Jones, who had made the fourth of the party, was now busily and skilfully staunching his master's wounds.

“What do you here, Harry ?” exclaimed my brother, raising himself on his arm, as I rode up. “Get you gone, in God's name ! I am but little hurt. That cursed faintness made me fall ; but I am better now as I lie down. Get thee gone, Harry, to the regiment ! I am little hurt, indeed.”

“Verily, God be praised, what his honour says is true,” added Gabriel. “By the special intervention of Providence, which never deserts those destined and elected to be vessels of grace, the sword of the unrighteous man has not touched any mortal part, and though he be faint even unto death, yet shall he do well.”

I knew the rascal to be no bad chirurgeon, and therefore derived great consolation from his assurance, especially as Frank, even after having ceased to speak, motioned me to my horse

again, and seemed anxious for my departure. No time indeed was to be lost ; and after endeavouring as far as possible to ascertain the truth, in regard to the injuries he had received ; and having satisfied myself that they were only dangerous from the immense loss of blood he had sustained, I gave directions to one of the troopers to stay with Gabriel Jones, and convey his wounded officer to the mansion-house. I then knelt by my brother's side, and whispered the assurance that I had merely taken the command of the regiment as his second, and that the matter of the supersedure was unknown to any but ourselves. His present circumstances, I added, would be a full excuse to Lord Goring for his absence from the regiment ; and that I hoped to see him both better and happier, when I returned, if ever that took place.

He pressed my hand affectionately, though faintly ; and again motioned me to depart. I accordingly sprang upon my horse, and resumed with all speed the road towards Maidstone.

For some time I rode on with my reveries uninterrupted by any other sound than the clatter of my horse's feet : but in less than half

an hour, the wind, which set strong in our faces, brought the report of artillery. Another and another dull heavy roar succeeded the first, and although I had given especial orders not to quit the walk at which the troops were proceeding when I left them, till I returned again; I feared lest they might hurry on at the sound, and, giving my horse the spur, never quitted the gallop till I came up with the rear of the regiment. The noise of the artillery was now incessant, and mounting a fresh horse, I put my men into a quick pace, and hurried forward towards the rendezvous, though the hour appointed had not yet arrived.

As I passed backwards and forwards, almost all the officers found an opportunity to ask concerning my brother: "Sadly wounded, but not dead," was my general answer; and I took occasion, as I rode a moment by each troop, to notice the animating voice of the cannon, and to speak of the strife to which we were fast approaching, as the thing that all brave men must most desire.

Both men and officers were all eager enough; and there was a slight degree of rivalry between

the troop which had already gained some glory in the field, and those which had been left behind, which promised emulation—one of the best roads to great success.

The two miles which the regiment was distant from Maidstone, when I rejoined it, were passed as rapidly as possible; and I am afraid that more than one pannier full of eggs and chickens were overturned by the troopers, in their eagerness to advance, as they almost ran down a number of peasants and market-women, who were hastening away from a town, where hard blows were for the time the only marketable commodities. Nearer and nearer as we came, the scene of confusion became greater, the roar of the cannon more loud; but mingled, and as it were supported by a thousand other sounds, which easily directed the ear to the scene of strife. Just as we were about to turn out of the road, upon the little green where we had been directed to wait, something loud whistled past my head; and, at the same instant, as it seemed, a cannon-ball struck a young pollard elm tree, in the hedge row, and the upper part, with a tremendous crash, fell across the road

before me. I was startled for a moment, I own; but, knowing the effect of trifles upon large bodies of men, I made a great effort to recover myself, and without, I believe, any pause, or perceptible change of demeanour, I leaped my horse over the fallen mass, and pursued my way. The troopers followed, most of them with a light laugh, and in a moment after we were on the green, before the little alehouse called the Bush.

The scene of confusion, now before our eyes, was tremendous. Clouds of smoke were rolling over the green, from the slope of the hill beyond; on which, in dim and confused masses, we could see the forces of the Roundheads and the Cavaliers engaged in deadly strife. The ruinous effect of the cannon-balls was visible in all the houses round about; and overturned carts, dead bodies, wounded men, abandoned arms, and plunderers already pillaging the dead, showed that the struggle had changed its scene, and had passed over the very spot where we stood.

It still wanted ten minutes of the hour which had been assigned for my arrival; but in such

a case, it seemed to me, that to stand idle waiting for orders, would be worse than acting on my own responsibility ; but in the smoke and confusion, I could not ascertain whether the dark masses interposed between me and the hill were rebels or cavaliers.

Halting the men for a moment, I rode forward to the other side of the green, where it terminates at the summit of a steep bank, under which passes the high road, and which commanded a better view of the field. But it was in vain I did so ; the smoke was so thick that I could only distinguish long rows of pikes, and dark columns of troops, bodies of cavalry whirling here and there, like flights of plovers, mingled altogether with the sudden flashes of artillery and musketry, and the occasional glance of a steel cap or cuirass. I could make nothing of it ; and as I rode back towards the regiment, I was looking about amongst the wounded cavaliers, who were strewed here and there upon the green, for some one capable of giving me information as to which was the royal army ; when a little boy, apparently not twelve years old, without hat or shoes or stockings, ran

up to the side of my horse; and eyeing me attentively all the way, followed me to the head of my men. The moment, however, that he saw me approach close to them, he said, in an inquiring tone: "Colonel Masterton?"

"Well, my little man," I said, surprised at hearing my own name, with my brother's rank attached to it. "What is it?"

"From the General!" he said, in the same laconic style, holding up to me a little bit of crumpled paper, in which I found written with a pencil:

"We are forced to retreat before superior numbers. If possible, make a circuit through the skirts of the town, and charge the enemy's left flank, while I extricate my infantry. At all events, make a diversion by a charge, cut your way through, and join me.

"NORWICH."

"The boy will lead you," was added below; and though such a guide seemed a very insecure trust for the safety of so many men, I had, of course, nothing to do but obey. "Can you bring me by some by-path to the left of the enemy's line, my man?" I demanded.

“ Yes !” was all the reply, and off he set before me like a shot. I had hardly time to put the regiment in motion and follow, before he had made a circuit round the green, to a spot where a narrow lane led down amongst some dull houses at the back of the town. Seeing that our little conductor ran like the wind, I hurried our pace, and without a moment’s pause for thought or reflection, he threaded half a dozen intricate turnings, at every break in which, we could hear the voice of the battle roaring on our right hand. At last, he stopped at the entrance of a road which turned in that direction ; and suddenly bounding up by my horse’s side, as if to reach my ear, he said in a low quick tone : “ Now take care, you are upon them.”

Almost as he spoke, I spurred forward and turned into the road. It seemed to have been but a cart-way, between two houses into the fields beyond, and was not altogether twenty yards long ; so that at once, the battle again broke upon my sight ; but now much nearer than before, and with my position reversed in regard to the field. The wind here set from

me, and blew the smoke away, so that I could distinguish plainly the objects that were in the foreground. The general plan of the field, however, and the positions of the two armies, I confess I neither saw nor understood.

A small park of artillery, which seemed extremely well served, and a considerable body of heavy horse left to guard it, were the first things that struck my sight; and the same glance informed me at once, by the plain, rude habiliments of the soldiers, that the horse I saw were Roundheads. They were placed a little higher on the ground than we were; and, apparently left for the specific purpose of defending the cannon. The troopers were sitting idle on their horses, gazing over the field, with the long line of their backs and of their horses' croupes towards me. To charge them was, of course, my determination; and I brought up the regiment as fast as possible.

The first thing that made the rebels aware of our presence was, our forming about a hundred yards in their rear; and even then, more than one of them turned his head, and seemingly taking us for some of their own regiments, did

not give the alarm. At length, a trooper, more observant than the rest, remarked our colours ; and there was an immediate movement amongst them ; but by this time we were ready to charge, and were upon them before they could properly wheel.

I saw a good deal of wavering and confusion along their line as we came up ; and just as we were closing—when each man could distinguish his antagonist as perfectly as if they sat beside each other—when every feature, grim and tense, with the eagerness of attack and defence, was as clear as in a picture—the hearts of some of their troopers, shaken by surprise and disarray, failed ; and they attempted to turn their bridles from the shock. Immense confusion ensued ; and with a loud shout we poured into their broken ranks, cut down the artillery-men at their guns, and drove back the flying cavalry upon the pikemen of the left wing. Many of the rebels, however, stood manfully, in spite of the flight of their companions ; and one little knot in the centre, refusing all quarter, were absolutely hewn from their saddles.

The effect of our charge, I afterwards found,

had been great upon the fortunes of the day. The artillery of the enemy's left, which had thrown Lord Norwich's retreating infantry into confusion, being now silenced, order was restored in that part of his army; and at the same time, as the parliamentary pikemen were in many places trodden down by their own cavalry, an opportunity was afforded of rallying the royalist horse, to keep the enemy in check; while Lord Norwich concentrated his troops upon the road, and the retreat assumed a firm and regular order.

At first, after having gained the height, and caught a glance of the position of the various forces, I fancied that a few brisk charges, while the Roundheads were still in confusion, would have turned the day in our favour, as on the former occasion at Wrotham. But the whole business, as I soon found, was of a very different nature. The part of the parliamentary army which I saw, was nothing but their left wing, which had been extended for the purpose of turning the right flank of the Royalists, and intercepting their retreat. Lord Norwich had extended his right to counteract this movement;

but, in doing so, the superior numbers of the enemy, and the well-directed fire of their artillery, had nearly effected the dispersion of his whole force ; and our arrival in the rear of the rebels, was only in time to save that wing of the royal army.

The confusion of their cavalry, and the capture of their artillery, was seen by the parliamentary generals, as soon as by the cavaliers : and while a small body of our friends came down to support me, a large mass of pikemen and a regiment of cavalry, began to rise over the slope, which concealed the main body of the Roundheads from my sight. Success gives boldness ; and I was just about to charge them, notwithstanding the vast superiority of their numbers, when an officer rode up to me from Lord Goring.

“ You are to bring in your regiment, Sir, with all speed,” he said, “ in order to cover the retreat of the infantry.”

“ Where is Lord Goring ?” I demanded.

“ Yonder, Sir !” was the reply. “ Just beyond that cuckoldy regiment of London horse, to the left of those coming up the hill.”

“Then my shortest way will be through them,” I replied.

“The shortest way, Sir, but the roughest, perhaps,” answered the officer, with somewhat of a sneer, which would have sent me through them if they had been a legion of fiends, instead of a regiment of London Burghers.

“You had better keep away to the left, young gentleman ; and so over the rise without meddling with them.”

“Take through the hollow way, and you will be upon them before they see you,” said a small voice near me ; and looking down, I saw, to my surprise, the little guide who had brought me Lord Goring’s first commands. It was evident that he was right in his counsel. A way cut through the soil to some lime-pits, intersected a great part of the field ; and as the Londoners were retreating, they would probably be in the very act of crossing it, at the moment I arrived in their neighbourhood. The poor boy who pointed it out, however, could not pass without some notice ; and throwing him some money, I bade him get off the field as fast as he could.

“ I have been in more battles than ever you were,” replied the boy ; but bid some one take me up, and I will show you the way.”

He was mounted in a moment, behind one of the troopers ; and, betaking ourselves to the hollow way, we followed the lime-road, till it again opened out upon the field. To my no small consternation, however, when we were again upon level ground, I found the London Burghers, as I expected, it is true, between me and Lord Goring ; but my path had been marked, and the body of horse and pikemen which had been sent to reinforce the left wing, was now wheeling on my flank, within a hundred and fifty yards of me.

The situation was critical ; but a moment's pause would have been ruin. The only hope was, to cut through the Londoners before the others could come up, and ordering the trumpeters to sound a charge, we dashed in amongst them. They were taken by surprise : their line was extended, and shallow ; ours was narrow and deep ; and our whole purpose being, to force our passage, we poured our squadrons at once upon their centre, and cleared ourselves a

way by the very impetus of our course. Not that the citizens fought amiss. Not a man attempted to turn his bridle, as they had done in the first regiment we attacked; and I do believe, that the two troops with which we came in contact, were annihilated where they stood, — a great part cut down, and many trodden under the horses' feet. Nor did we ourselves suffer a little; for we afterwards found, that nearly a hundred men had fallen in our ranks, during the brief moment which was required to cut our way through. I was slightly wounded myself in the face, and in the arm; but not so much so as to disable me in any degree; and we continued the same rapid pace with which we had advanced, till we reached the foot of the hill from which Lord Goring was directing the efforts of the cavalry that remained upon the field. The last companies of infantry were now retreating easily along the high road; and the firing had ceased on both parts. But dense masses of the parliamentary horse were seen coming up in all directions; and it seemed evident, that we should still have a very severe

and difficult task, to effect our retreat before so superior an enemy.

Leaving the regiment at the foot of the hill, I rode up to the General, who instantly welcomed me in the midst of all the orders he was giving. "Welcome, welcome, and a thousand thanks, Colonel Masterton!" he exclaimed.— "So your brother would not come?" he added, in a lower voice.

"He is desperately wounded, my Lord"—I replied; but he would not suffer me to finish my sentence, exclaiming, "I am glad of it! I am glad of it! Better be killed, Sir, in a noble field like this, than throwing away his honour in sloth and inactivity. You have yourself done nobly;—but there is no time for long thanks. We must be now drawing off after the infantry. Fairfax thinks he has won a battle, but I can tell him, with six thousand men, half raw recruits, to effect our retreat in such order before twenty thousand, is worth three better victories than ever he gained."

The movements of the enemy were by this time slackening in activity; and drawing off the

regiments of cavalry one by one, Lord Goring continued his retreat with comparative ease. The enemy's horse continued to follow us, it is true ; and twice I received orders to face about and charge them ; but before noon we could hear their trumpets of recall, sounding in all directions ; and it became evident that the Parliamentary generals had abandoned the pursuit.

As soon as it was judged advisable to halt, I proceeded to inspect the regiment as carefully as possible ; and in ascertaining our loss, which had been very severe, I found that the prisoner, Walter Dixon, had contrived to effect his escape, in the hurry and confusion of the events through which we had just passed. To tell the truth, I was not particularly sorry to get rid of him, now that our junction with Lord Goring had taken place ; but at the same time, we had gained an addition to the regiment, for the little boy who had guided us so well, had remained sticking close to the back of the trooper who had taken him up, and seemed quite contented with his quarters. What to do with him embarrassed me a good deal, but I reserved that question for future consideration ; and, with

the usual fate of all things delayed, it met with a thousand new postponements, till accident took the affair into its own hands.*

* A somewhat different account of these transactions is given by Lord Clarendon, but the passage in which he speaks of this encounter, is so brief, as to leave all the minor details in doubt; nor indeed could his relation be taken in preference to that of an eye-witness.

CHAPTER XII.

IT is always a sad review, the inspection of a regiment after a battle, even when the men gone were but little known to their officers ; the number of familiar faces lost to his eye, the silence of voices whose tone had been heard a thousand times answering the roll call ; and many a little circumstance by which the dead were linked to memory, must render it a melancholy task. But in those instances where the regiment has been raised almost entirely from the tenantry or the neighbours of the person who commands it, where each face is familiar as his brother's, and where there are multitude of common interests, memories, and affections, between his own bosom and that of every man he leads to the field, it is scarcely possible to

tell how painful is the examination which exhibits so many lost. These feelings of personal and individual concern for every man under my command, made me perhaps hurry to the investigation, before any of the officers of other regiments thought fit to proceed to the task. I found many missing, and amongst the rest, the saddle of poor William Fells was vacant.

I had scarcely concluded, when I was called to Lord Goring, and hastened instantly to obey the summons. I was directed by the corporal who brought the command, to a small inn with the sign of a bull's head painted in deep crimson over the door; and entering the passage, I made my way through a crowd of persons, some civil, some military, that were hanging about, with countenances in which both fatigue and anxiety were very manifest. At a small, rickety, unpainted deal door, whose thin and shapeless form but little impeded the sound of the discussion which was going on within from reaching the ears of those without, stood a sentinel with musket in hand and match lighted, and that appearance of stolid deafness in his countenance, which it behoves all sentinels near

thin doors and angry debates, to assume. Whom he was stationed to keep out, and whom to admit, heaven knows ; but he made no difficulty of permitting me to enter ; and, in a moment after, I was in the presence of about twenty, or five and twenty gentlemen, who seemed to be doing their best to forget the gifts of their station and education, in the fury of discussion.

One — a florid burly squire, with no very military air or courtly demeanour — was standing up at the side of the table, round which the rest were seated, roaring away a heap of unconnected and hesitating sentences, with a face fiery between the anger of opposition, and the consciousness of talking nonsense. At a little distance sat a more tranquil person, tearing to pieces a very good pen which he had gathered from an inkstand in the midst. He was not interrupting the other, it is true ; but he was muttering to himself from time to time, loud enough to be heard by every one but the speaker, — “ That ’s false ! You’re an idiot ! Blundering ass ! ” and various other courteous ejaculations of the same nature.

Three more gentlemanly men on the other side of the table, appeared, with their heads close together, conversing in a whisper, without attending to any one else; while Lord Norwich was sitting at the head of the room with a roll of letters and other papers under his hand. His countenance was full of anger and vexation; and from time to time a scornful smile curled his lip while the other was speaking, which certainly did not improve the declaimer's oratory, or calm the passion by which he was evidently affected.

“So!” thought I, as I entered, “this is a council of war, is it? it wants but little, it would seem, to become a field of battle.”

So absurd, indeed, was the whole scene, to a person whose passions had not been worked up to the same pitch, that I could have laughed notwithstanding all the sorrowful details which I had been lately examining, had I not been restrained by the expression of deep anxiety and vexation which I beheld in some of the finer and nobler countenances around me.

“You may sneer, my Lord! you may sneer!” said the burly orator, just as I was entering, “but I’ll tell you what,—it does not at all sig-

nify,—the gentlemen of Kent, I say,—the gentlemen of Kent will not be thrown away in this manner.—Why, did not I now, and my brother,—did not we join the King's army willingly, with all the force we could make? and did not I tell you, if you would march then, half the country would join you as you went?—and did not you listen to Edward Hales there, instead of to me, and have we not now lost half our men and more?”

“Not by the course I pursued, Sir!” replied Lord Norwich; “had I listened to your advice, we should not have lost half, but the whole. However, Sir, to end this matter at once, I am, I believe, commander-in-chief for his Majesty, and in his Majesty's name I have to tell you that, with thanks for your service, we do not want volunteers to command us; we want men to fight, Sir, and not to dictate.”

“Fight, Sir! And have I not fought?” demanded the other, in the same outrageous tone. “Have not all my men fought?—Did not my poor brother fight?—ay, Sir! did he not fight till he dropped at this cursed Maidstone? and did I not see him, when last I saw

him in life, waving his hand, and crying Long live King Charles? — ay, when he was down beneath the horses' feet!"

"You had better dismiss the council, my Lord," said one of the gentlemen, on the General's right hand. This is turning out ill."

Lord Norwich took his advice; and cutting across the person who was speaking, he said, with a grave and melancholy expression, "I am deeply grieved for your brother, Sir Charles, and deeply grieved for the loss of your fine body of tenantry: but I hope that matters may not be so bad, — your brother may only be wounded. In the mean time," he continued, seeing the other about to break in upon him, "In the mean time, I will consider what every one has said, — especially what you have said, Sir Charles; and in an hour or two, when we are all calmer, I may, perhaps, again call for your advice. At present, I think it will be better for you all to go and refresh yourselves, and I will receive the reports of our numbers, and confer with you hereafter, gentlemen."

So saying, he rose, and his example was followed by the rest. Before they took their depar-

ture, however, the members of the council, if so it could be called, broke up into two or three groups, and conversed in these separate parties for some time. Lord Norwich himself spoke quickly and eagerly, in the recess of the window, with the two gentlemen who had sat next to him ; and the last words which were uttered by one of his advisers were, “ Most decidedly, my Lord. It is a step that, depend upon it, is now inevitable, and the sooner it is taken, the greater chance of safety to all concerned.”

“ Well — well —” replied Lord Norwich, slowly, “ be it so ! Now, gentlemen,” he added, turning to the others, “ by your leave, I will receive the reports from the regiments.”

The whole party, with the exception of the two who had been speaking with the Commander-in-chief, took the hint he gave, and withdrew. I was about to follow, with another officer, who, like myself, had not sat down at the council board ; but Lord Norwich made us a sign to remain. After watching the rest out, he walked forward, and closed the door ; and

then made two or three slow turns in the room, with the letters which he still held in his hand clasped with an intensity which bespoke more mental emotion than he chose to appear upon his countenance. At length, he resumed his seat at the head of the table ; and, calling the two who seemed his most confidential friends, to his side, he begged us all to be seated ; and, after thinking deeply for a few minutes, he turned to me, and the other officer who had entered the room nearly at the same moment as myself ; and to him Lord Goring first addressed himself. “ Sir John Powel,” he said, “ your regiment, though one of the most gallant in the service, appears to have suffered less to-day than usual. Have you any guess how many men you can muster ? ”

“ About seven hundred, my Lord,” replied the other ; “ but it is only a guess. However, certainly not less than six hundred and fifty.”

“ And you, Colonel Harry Masterton,” rejoined the Commander-in-chief, “ what number, think you, can you bring into the field—effective men, I mean ? ”

“Certainly not more than three hundred and fifty, my Lord,” I replied, “if you do not mean me to include the badly wounded.”

“Good God !” exclaimed Goring. “They have thinned us indeed. I did not think I saw so many of your saddles empty, Sir?”

“There are not so many killed, as there are so badly wounded as not to be fit to sit their horses,” I answered. “I have just gone over the roll, my Lord, and I am certain of my accuracy.”

“I do not doubt it, Sir,” replied the General ; “I do not doubt it. Retire, gentlemen, for a moment, but do not quit the door.”

Sir John Powel and I immediately obeyed, and were recalled almost as soon ; when my companion was dismissed with commands simply to inspect his regiment, and take every care that the horses were supplied with forage, and the men with food. I remained longer, and received orders to march, towards nightfall, upon a little hamlet which I had passed between Penford-bourne and Maidstone, taking with me a regiment of newly raised foot. The enemy, Lord Goring explained to me, had

established there an out-post, and it was the object of the Royalists to conceal their farther march, and make the Roundheads believe that they were endeavouring to force their way once more towards London.

“The worst part of the story is now to be told you, Colonel Masterton,” the General added. “You will attack the out-post, and no doubt immediately make yourself master of the hamlet; but after you have done so, you may march on in what direction you please.”

So sudden and so strange an announcement, forced from my lips the exclamation of “Good God!” But Lord Norwich proceeded without noticing my surprise.

“The regiment of foot which I send with you, will, beyond all question, disperse before morning; at least, if it follow the plan that all our regiments here are doing; for not a night passes but we lose three or four hundred men. The case, Sir, I am sorry to say, is quite hopeless. Had all the friends who promised to join me, brought up their forces as I was marching on London, the King, Sir, would have been at this moment upon his throne; but now I must abandon Kent, where

the Royalists, as you may judge from the scene you have just witnessed, are more difficult to rule than the Roundheads are to beat. I must then make the best of my way towards Essex, and can only hope to cover my retreat by deceiving the enemy. Do as much as you can, therefore, to magnify the appearance of your forces. Extend your line; keep your trumpets sounding; send a troop round to the other side of the hamlet; kill as many of cuckoldy scum as you can, but take no prisoners, lest, by escaping afterwards, they betray your real numbers. Neither must you halt longer at the hamlet, than just to refresh yourselves. Then, if you take my advice, you will retire into the fields, and disperse your foot; for if a hundred or two do stay with you, they will only embarrass you. After that, you can either try to join me in Essex, if you hear that we are there having any success; or endeavour to reach Wales, and fight it out with the cavaliers in the mountains; or force your way back to Devonshire, and keep quiet till a more favourable moment."

It appeared to me that his Lordship spoke

very coolly of our probable fate. But I could pardon him, as his own, if he fell into the hands of the Roundheads, was likely to be worse. As the line of march laid down for me towards the enemy's out-post, was across the country, I ventured to ask for a guide ; upon which the commander demanded, with no small animation, what had become of the little messenger he had sent me in the morning ?

“He is with the regiment now, my Lord,” I replied: “Can he serve to guide me to-night ?”

“He can guide you to any part of the country,” answered Lord Goring. “But if you carry him with you, Colonel Masterton ; you must give me your word of honour that you will take such care of him as if he were the child of a dear friend. His father, Sir, was as true a Cavalier as ever drew his sword. Many a flagon have we emptied together, and in many a hard field did he fight. This boy, Sir, was born and bred in the midst of scenes that break one in to dangers and difficulties early ; and in many a battle has he sat upon a baggage-waggon before he could walk, clapping his

little hands at the braying of the trumpets and the roar of the artillery. When he was five years old, I have seen him running amongst the ranks, where the shot was flying like hail, or mounted on the pommel of his father's saddle, heading the charge against pike and gun. He never forgets either place or person that he has once seen ; he never forgets a word that he has once heard ; he never misunderstands what you mean, and every inch of Kent and Sussex he knows as well as a geographer. His father was killed about a year ago, and I lost sight of the poor lad ; but he came upon me suddenly at Maidstone, all in rags, and I vowed I would never let him quit me again. But, God help me ! 'tis not the first vow I have broken ; but he will be safer with you than with me. We used to call him Little Ball-o'-fire. But his true name is John Marston Hall."

I willingly promised to be kind to the dead soldier's boy, as far as circumstances would permit me to be kind to any one ; and then, having been forced to drink a cup of strong waters, which had been circulating pretty liberally amongst Lord Goring's council on their

first arrival, I took my leave and returned to the regiment. I discovered little Ball-o'-fire in the midst of the troopers, questioning them, with short, sharp interrogatories, which I found, by a casual word or two, referred to myself. The account given by the soldiers was, apparently, not very unfavourable; for, when I asked the boy if he would go with me, he looked up with his bright black eyes, glistening with eagerness, and replied, "Yes,—over the world."

Unhappily, by this time there was many a vacant saddle in our ranks; and many a poor fellow whom, it was evident, I should be forced to leave behind, to follow as they could when their wounds were whole again. There was no difficulty, therefore, in mounting poor little Ball-o'-fire; but the care of my wounded men took me up till it was nearly time to depart. I succeeded, however, in getting them carried out of the line of high road, and distributed amongst some cottagers, who, for a trifling gratification, undertook to guard and take care of them; and although this was but frail security for their comfort and protection, I could do nothing better, and was forced to leave them,

after having added as much as I could to their purses, from my own little store.

When all this was done, the regiment numbered about three hundred and forty-seven effective men, and about forty more, who could sit their horses, but were unfit for any active duty.

Our corps, however, was singular in one respect. Having come a length of way; and being all united in one community of feelings and remembrances, there was not one man had deserted; while the rest of Lord Goring's forces—either entirely levied or principally recruited in Kent—were spreading over the country by hundreds; and, indeed, as he proceeded on his retreat through the native places of his soldiers, the march of his army was like the progress of a carrier, who drops a part of his charge at every village by which he passes.

At the hour appointed, every thing was prepared to set out; and having ascertained in person, that the Commander-in-chief had no farther orders, I took my final leave, and gave the word to march.

Nothing of any consequence occurred during

our progress. We arrived at the hamlet just at that dim moment of the night, when the sun has quite set, and before the moon has risen, so that we were upon the out-post of the rebels before they were aware. Seeing little or no object in destroying the handful of men which the place contained, I endeavoured to restrict our efforts to making a great show, and a great deal of noise, without spilling much blood. But the soldiers, especially the foot, were savage with the events of the morning, and the loss of their companions; and in despite of orders and entreaties, they gave no quarter. Some one also, either accidentally or intentionally, set fire to the hamlet; and a cruel piece of useless barbarity remains generally attributed to me, which I would have given my right hand to prevent. But such, I am afraid, is our general fate, either in good or bad. The things we strive with our whole strength to accomplish, bring us no renown; and we, nine times out of ten, owe our fame or our infamy either to a trifle, an accident, or a misunderstanding.

The effect of our attack, nevertheless, was such as Lord Goring desired; and was perhaps

more than he had expected. The fugitives from the burning hamlet magnified our strength, and for two days afterwards, it was generally believed in the Parliamentary army, that the whole Royalist force had pushed past their right ; and much anxiety was entertained for the result. In the mean while, Lord Goring, with his companions, effected their passage into Essex ; and after a time, threw themselves into Colchester, on the memorable siege of which place I need not pause.

From the flames of the burning hamlet I drew off the forces with all speed ; and crossing the fields, following the courses of the brooks and streams, and practising a thousand other manœuvres to conceal our line of retreat, I at length brought my men safely to a spot about six miles south-west from Maidstone. There I communicated to the remnant of a regiment of foot, which had accompanied me, the commands of Lord Goring ; and though I heard a good deal of grumbling and profane swearing, I believe from my heart, there was not a man in the ranks that was not very well contented with the order to disperse. Nay, more : I do not believe

that there would have been one of them with me by the following morning. The next consideration became, how I might best effect my retreat with the cavalry to Penford-bourne, the direction of which I had by this time very nearly lost. Here, however, little Ball-o'-fire proved of no small service by his counsels.

“You will soon have the moon,” he said, when he heard my difficulty; “and she must rise nearly behind the old castle. Till then, follow that star, and whichever way the road winds, turn back to the star again; by which, at all events, we shall be getting nearer.”

The character Lord Goring had given him made me trust much more implicitly to his advice than his age seemed to warrant; and I did not find myself deceived. There were one or two dull clouds upon the edge of the sky, which cut off whatever portion of the evening light still lingered, at that period of the summer, about the line of the horizon; but in a short time those clouds began to be tinged with red as from a fire, and I felt some alarm lest any part of the enemy's force should have been detached in that direction; but, a few minutes after,

some lines of silver mingled with the red on the edges of the vapours, and then the round disk of the summer moon, looking fiery and large through the horizontal mist, came forth above the clouds. The moment she did so, the whole scene was clear. The castle, with the rocks and woods amongst which it stood, rose in dark masses a little to the right of the beautiful orb, whose beams, pouring over the large old trees in the park at Penford-bourne, came gently down the valley through which we were advancing, picking out with bright light, a thousand marks to guide us on our onward progress.

“ Oh, but that ’s a nice old castle !” cried my little guide, who now rode by my side, mounted on an immense trooper’s horse, which he managed like a giant. “ Oh, but that is a nice old castle ! I know places in it would conceal a thousand men.”

“ Indeed !” exclaimed I, remembering all that had passed when I last visited it. “ Indeed ! Whereabouts, my boy ?”

“ I cannot tell ; but I can show,” replied the

boy ; “ and I would not like even to show without occasion.”

“ We may have occasion but too soon, for aught I know,” replied I : “ and besides, John Marston, I may have many reasons for wishing to know.”

“ Call me Ball-o'-fire,” answered the boy, “ if you love me, gallant Sir, and I will show you all the places with my whole heart ; but it is a pity that all the world should know of a place which has hid many a brave and honest man, and may hide many another.”

“ It has hid many a rogue, little Ball-o'-fire,” I rejoined, “ and of that I have had good proof ; but, however, by it for our landmark we shall soon reach Penford-bourne.”

“ Ay, and the fair Lady Eleanor Fleming,” said the boy, “ she was kind to me, two or three years since, and patted my head, and looked gentle at me ; but her dark husband, Sir Andrew Fleming, frowned like a thunder-cloud, all the time I was there.”

“ And how long has Sir Andrew Fleming been dead, my boy ?” I demanded.

“Is he dead?” asked the boy, “They said he was jealous of her; and they parted, never to see each other again; but he did not die; and he went across the sea with Monsieur du Tillet, who had once been as badly wived, I’ve heard my father say, as Sir Andrew himself.”

“And why do you say he was badly wived, little Bali-o’-fire?” I demanded again, anxious to get all the information on this subject I could, as we marched on. “Perhaps it was his own fault he was unhappy.”

“Still he was badly wived!” replied the boy. “If I were to mingle honey and salt, would you not say it was ill mixed? He was as stern as a piece of artillery; and she was as light and as gay as a twinkling lark: and that was the reason I have heard them say that she hated him as much as he loved her: and love and hate in one house, you know, are like gunpowder and ball in a cannon,—the one is sure to drive the other out of window.—But, oh, he is not dead;—no, no, he cannot be dead. I heard of his being alive the other day.”

“Pray God he be!” I mentally exclaimed;

for I felt certain that Frank knew not of his existence; and I calculated strongly on that piece of news ending at once the mad and hopeless passion with which he was possessed.

Various and unconnected were the meditations to which the boy's words gave rise in my mind. Frank had himself told me that Lady Eleanor Fleming was a widow; and, although I had heard the speakers at the old castle allude to the husband of the lady of whom they spoke, as soon as I became convinced that the one I had imagined to be Gabriel Jones was in fact not him, I had nearly forgotten the circumstance. I had some doubt, I had some fears indeed, that my brother's attachment had gone so far as to leave deep and painful impressions behind; but I knew the principles in which he had been educated, and I was not afraid that he would continue to nourish feelings such as those which he now experienced, when he learned that they were not only hopeless, but criminal. I felt sure that, on the belief of Lady Eleanor's perfect freedom from all ties, Frank had encouraged a passion, which, how-

ever likely to meet with the most decided opposition from his father, was pure and honourable.. Her conduct had not a similar excuse ; and I concluded that much of the agitation and anxiety which her manner had so often betrayed, had arisen in the consciousness of that fatal secret which must blast for ever the hopes she was encouraging in my brother. I trusted also, that indignation at having been deceived, might do something to deliver Frank from his thralldom ; and I resolved to state the matter boldly to him, and rely on his better angel to make him willingly accompany the regiment in its retreat to Devonshire.

At all events, I saw that if he remained, he remained to destruction, in every sense ; and I was determined to use means, perhaps unjustifiable under any other circumstances, to force him from a situation so perilous to himself. Then came remembrance of the severe wounds he had received ; and the chance of his not being able to sit his horse, mingled with various wild speculations on the cause of the duel in

which he had been engaged. But, before I could give all these whirling thoughts a tangible form, and regular order, we were challenged by the sentry at the gates of the park, and once more halted our horses on the green at Penford-bourne.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALTHOUGH every consideration which ever in this world urged men to speed, now followed our footsteps to impel us on our course, yet by this time the horses were so fatigued, that to proceed was out of the question ; and, obliged to pause for a day at Penford-bourne, I took what care I could to provide for the refreshment of the troopers and their chargers ; and, casting myself down in the cottage which had first received us there, yielded to pure weariness and fell asleep.

Scarcely two hours' repose was allowed me, when I was awakened, according to my previous orders, at five o'clock. Leaving the regiment, still to take what rest it could, I rose and walked up towards the mansion, the servants of which

were generally early risers. I found the doors open, and one of the lackeys was showing me into the withdrawing-room, when we were met by Lady Eleanor herself, in such guise as led me to imagine that she had not pressed her pillow during the whole night. A faint exclamation of pleased surprise, and a look of joy, that could not be mistaken, annihilated the cold and unfriendly feelings which had been gathering towards her in my bosom, and I could not believe that she was acting towards my brother on any systematic principle of evil; but chose rather to think that, carried away, like himself, by strong and irresistible passion, she saw not—she would not see, the guilt of nourishing it, and the greater guilt to which it tended.

So I judged of her; and, whether I judged right or wrong—as I knew that it would be difficult to remove Frank from her dwelling, now that his duty no longer called him to the field, and now that his wounds gave him a fair excuse for lingering behind—I resolved in the first place to strive for her co-operation; and as the means of gaining it, to show her if I could, that however strong she might feel in her

own innocence, how great soever she might believe her own powers of resistance to be, the very encouragement of such a passion was criminal in itself; and but too sure, in the end, to undermine every virtuous principle.

The task, however, was one, of course, of difficulty and delicacy, which my youth and inexperience were scarcely qualified to attempt; and I paused long in considering how to begin. Holding the hand she had given me at our first meeting, I led her into the withdrawing-room, and closed the door, but still kept silence, every moment of which seemed but to increase my difficulty.

At length, after gazing at me anxiously for some minutes, she spoke herself. "I am afraid to ask," she said, in a low fearful voice, "the occasion of your speedy return. Your silence speaks but too plainly."

"The King's cause, Madam," I replied, "is lost, at least in Kent. The numbers of the rebels have prevailed against honour and loyalty; and, after a severe struggle at Maidstone, yesterday morning, Lord Goring was again forced to retreat, though not without glory, for

he repelled, during several hours, the fourfold force of the rebels; and then marched from the field in order and good array."

"'Tis bad news, indeed," said Lady Eleanor, "but, thank God, you have returned yourself, though, as I see, wounded. We have been very anxious for you here, ever since we heard the cannon yesterday. Your brother tells me," she continued, in a timid and faltering voice, "that he has seen you since the misfortunes of yesterday morning."

"He has, Lady," I replied. "As soon as I heard the likelihood of such an event, I returned, in order to prevent it; but returned too late. For him, now, is my great anxiety. How he is to be removed to Devonshire, which must be done with all speed, is a matter of no small difficulty."

"Removed, Captain Masterton!" she exclaimed. "Impossible! You know not the state of weakness to which the loss of blood has reduced him."

"To leave him here, Lady Eleanor," I rejoined, "would be leading him with my own hand to the scaffold. The Roundheads will be

here, probably, before two days are over ; and do not suppose that they will be very careful in their mode of removing him to the Tower, where the block and axe will be as certainly his doom, as they would be mine, if I were caught by the rebels."

"But I have interest amongst the Parliamentary people," she replied, anxiously. "Essex was my cousin ; Sir William Waller was my father's dear friend. I have other interest besides—great interest !"

"If, Lady, you can take upon yourself the responsibility of insuring my brother's life and liberty," I replied, "if you have the power to command his safety—"

"No ! no ! no !" she exclaimed, "I dare not risk it. I think I could ; but if I were to fail, I should never forgive my boldness ; death itself," she added passionately, "could not wipe out the memory of having devoted him to such a fate. Take him rather, Sir—take him with you, whatever it may cost. Yet, stay ! there is still a way. Could he not be concealed here till he is more fit to journey ? You do not know that there is a private passage from the

cellars of this house to the old castle on the hill. A chamber might easily be fitted up, where I could tend him myself, and where he might remain hidden from every other eye."

"I am afraid, Lady," I replied, now seeing at once that Gabriel Jones might very well have been the speaker on the hill after all, and have returned by the passage to which she alluded, "I am afraid that the secret communications of that old castle are known to many other persons besides yourself. Might I suggest also," I added, "that your Ladyship's husband might not perhaps—

The blood rushed up to her face like fire, and suddenly covering her eyes with one hand, she held forth the other towards me, as if imploring me to stop. The first agitated movement had broken through my sentence, but I felt now, that the time was come for me to say what I had intended, if ever; and entirely altering my tone to one of the utmost gentleness, and taking the fair hand she had extended with the purpose of staying me, I proceeded.

"Listen to me, dear Lady," I said. "Far be it from me to wish, for one moment, to hurt

your feelings, or to pain your heart. You cannot suppose, Lady Eleanor, that any young man of gentle breeding can see so fair and amiable a creature as you are, with the desire of wounding her for a moment. Believe me, then, when I say that I feel every interest in your happiness, and the more, from the deep regard I see you have for my brother. But, Lady, I cannot but feel also, that, for your welfare as well as for his safety, his speedy removal from this place is absolutely necessary. You cannot become his wife ; and though I doubt not that you believe you could ever remain his devoted, kind, and affectionate friend ; nay, that you could love him more deeply than any thing else on earth, without becoming criminal ; believe me, Lady, that such a state is somewhat more than dangerous. It can but end in the destruction of both."

While I spoke, through the fingers of the hand which remained firmly clasped over her eyes, the tear-drops rolled like rain ; and the agony she seemed to endure was terrible. At length she rose, and still turning away her head, " Stop, Sir !" she said, " Stop ! Your

motive doubtless is good ; but you take somewhat too great an advantage of my situation. Speak with your brother, yourself. Try to persuade him to go with you. If he refuse, I will see him, and endeavour to use such arguments as may most effectually move him. And now, Sir," she added, dashing the tears from her eyes, and turning round upon me with a glance of beautiful indignation : " And now, Sir, having wiped those unworthy drops away, I will beg you to leave me. Your brother sleeps, but I can tell you, for I have watched the night by his couch, that he has enjoyed uninterrupted slumber ; and, therefore, if you think fit to wake him, do. Should you find your reasoning vain, as I said before, have recourse to me, and fear not, I will do my part. Though let me tell you, Captain Masterton, that had I felt sure of being able to protect him, or to insure his life myself from the Parliamentarians, no weak doubt of either myself or him, would have made me yield him to a long journey, after such wounds as he has met with."

She bowed, and signed me to the door, with

an air of majestic command, which I felt no disposition to disobey ; and retiring from the withdrawing-room, I proceeded to the apartments of my brother.

On entering the dressing-room, I found Gabriel Jones, as usual, with the bible on his knee, and apparently deeply busied in reading the holy scriptures ; from which employment, however—as I knew that he grossly perverted, in his own foul mind, the pure words of everlasting truth that he there found written—I did not scruple to disturb him. In answer to my inquiries after my brother, he informed me that none of his wounds were at all dangerous ; and that though he was very weak, through loss of blood when he had fallen asleep the night before, there was little doubt that he would wake much stronger, from the long and tranquil repose which he had enjoyed. On inquiring still farther concerning the possibility of removing him, I found, to my surprise, that the valet was not at all unwilling to second my efforts in regard to the journey of his master. There was nothing, he said, to prevent his travelling. Men, much worse, had

been carried longer journeys; and in a litter, he would answer for it, that all would go well.

As Frank continued to sleep, I went down to the gate, and gave orders for preparing a machine with all speed, for carrying the object of our care, with as little motion as possible; and on my return, I found him just awake.

Our conversation was long, and he was much softened in character, by the languor of his frame; but all I had to tell him made little impression in regard to his journey, and his determination to remain, though expressed in a weaker voice, was couched in terms as firm ever. Lady Eleanor then became my only resource; and though she received me on my return with the same air of cold displeasure which she had assumed before we last parted, she instantly rose to fulfil the promise she had given.

“You will have the kindness to wait for me here, Captain Masterton,” she said. “On my return, I hope to bring you such tidings as you desire,—your brother’s servant is with him, I suppose?”

I replied that he was; and she left the room.

For near an hour I remained in expectation of her return ; but at length I was sent for to my brother's chamber, where I found Lady Eleanor sitting at a little distance from his bedside, and Gabriel Jones standing by. Fresh tears had evidently overflowed the lady's eyes, and my brother's countenance was flushed and agitated.

He did not speak, himself ; but left Lady Eleanor to communicate to me, that he would not farther oppose the measures I thought necessary for his safety. As it was improbable, however, that the Parliamentary Generals would immediately detach any considerable part of their forces in the direction of Penford-bourne, we determined not to set out till the cool of the evening ; and during the course of the day, both Lady Eleanor and Frank recovered greatly their composure ; although from the moment I had mentioned her husband's name, a degree of coldness, I might say haughty reserve, had come over the lady's manner towards me, which did not at all wear away during the day.

At the appointed hour, the litter we had prepared was brought to the door ; and Frank was carried down and placed safely in it. A

feeling that the last words which could ever pass between my brother and the fair being in whose bosom he had inspired such deep interest, must be spoken then, made me draw a little away, and also, on some excuse, send the guard down the avenue, as Lady Eleanor approached to bid him farewell. She had by this time gained perfect command over herself, and she spoke to him for some minutes without a tear dimming her eye, without a trace of agitation appearing on her countenance. At length, seeing her raise her head, I again approached, and as I did so, Frank repeated in a hasty voice, "Then I rely on you! You will not—surely you will not fail me!"

"By all I hold dear on earth, and beyond the earth!" she replied, in a low, thrilling tone, and, drawing back, she bowed slightly to me as I came up, and ascended the steps into the house. She was very pale, but seemed perfectly composed; and she walked steadfastly onward into her dwelling, without once turning her head. I thought I heard a heavy sob, as she passed the door: but if it were so, that was the only thing which marked emotions, that

were far more powerful, I felt sure, than those she suffered to appear.

The horses were now placed to the litter, as had been arranged ; and, at the end of the avenue, I put myself at the head of the regiment, and we began our march. The first day's journey was a painful one : Frank never opened his lips to me, though he spoke several times to Gabriel Jones ; and it seemed that he attributed to me all the necessary pain he felt at leaving a person he so dearly loved. I had made up my mind, however, to bear all that the peevishness of sickness, and the anger of disappointment could produce ; and I relaxed not a moment in endeavouring to soothe and console him, by every means in my power. The journey he bore even better than I had expected ; and when we halted, he forced himself to thank me for the pains I had bestowed upon his comfort. The night passed well, and nothing occurred to give us either disturbance or apprehension. No enemy appeared to be in the neighbourhood, and the people were, in general, loyal ; though one saintly preacher, whom I met in the streets of the little village where we halted, called me " a rusty hinge and a creaking door."

Frank passed the night quietly ; no fever resulted from his wounds ; and in the morning he was much stronger than the day before. His mind seemed more reconciled to his situation also ; and he did not appear to view me with the same cold dissatisfaction, which the whole of his conduct, during the previous day, had displayed. Before we began our morning's march, he spoke long with me on the events at Maidstone ; and the assurance that the circumstance of his supersedure still remained locked in my own bosom, appeared to afford him infinite relief.

From this time, as we advanced on our way towards Devonshire, I was almost constantly by the side of his litter, till his strength was sufficiently recovered to permit of his mounting his horse ; and he felt deeply, I am sure, all that I did to relieve and solace him. Even after he had quitted the litter, however, as he could not bear any extraordinary fatigue, the command of the regiment remained with me for several days ; and during that time, various difficulties and obstacles obstructed our progress. An occasional rencontre with different bodies of the

militia, served to keep our parties in constant activity ; and in more than one large town, our advance was threatened with interruption by multitudes of the inhabitants, who collected to call us “ Malignant dogs, hungering after the Saints, to devour them.”

Our reception, indeed, was very different at the several places through which we passed. In some we were hooted, and even pelted by the mob ; and in others, we were welcomed with joy, supplied with all we could want, and suffered to depart with God’s benison. But on the whole, our passage through the country was more favourable than perhaps we had a right to hope for ; and in almost all cases, where the magistrates or other civil authorities showed any disposition to impede our movements, I found that they were in general soon brought to reason by being informed, that we were retreating quietly, for the purpose of dispersing ourselves in our own homes ; that if suffered to pass unopposed, we would injure no one ; but that being resolute men, we would cut our way through at all risks, on the slightest show of resistance. Nor, indeed, could they have

attempted to stop us with any prospect of success, for a great many circumstances combined to leave the country nearly open for our march. One large body of the Parliamentary forces was still pursuing Lord Goring and the rest, in Kent. A second was directing its march towards Essex; a third, under Cromwell, was advancing to meet the Duke of Hamilton, and Sir Marmaduke Langdale, in Lancashire; and at the same time, troops were necessarily left for the defence of London, as well as for completing in Wales what Cromwell had by this time begun by the reduction of Pembroke Castle. Thus, I do not believe that in any county through which we passed, five hundred men could have been collected to oppose us, at less than a week's notice. Our retreat, therefore, I may almost say, was uninterrupted; and long before the knowledge of our passage had spread through the country, we had nearly reached the place to which our movements tended.

Frank had by this time recovered his strength; and with pleasure I resigned to him, on the borders of Devonshire, the command of

the regiment. Gradually as his health was restored, his mind had seemed to recover its tone; but still he was silent, absent, grave. On approaching his home, all his old feelings and habits appeared to return. The same reserve, the same calm self-possession, was resumed; and, though I could see a change—though I perceived and knew that the fire which had been lighted up in his heart, was any thing but really extinguished; yet, I do not think the most attentive observer, who had not watched him as I had watched, would have known any difference between the Cavalier who had quitted Devonshire two months before, and him who now returned.

Towards me, indeed, there was a decided alteration in some respects. He was as reserved as ever; he never mentioned a thousand subjects that busily employed the memory of each, every hour of our existence; he never told me his thoughts, his feelings, his plans for the future; but he was softer in his manner; evinced more deference for my opinion; and would often mingle his conversation with some kind and endearing word, that went sweetly

home to my heart, and won all its best sympathies for him.

Such was the state of affairs when a messenger, whom we had despatched to Masterton House, returned with a letter from my father, containing directions to disperse the regiment, and let the troopers return home to their houses with as little parade as possible. He informed my brother, to whom the letter was addressed, that he had already entered into an understanding with the Parliamentary commissioners, who were at Exeter, that on the disbanding of all forces, no farther notice should be taken of the part we had acted, than the infliction of a small and almost nominal fine. He, at the same time, sent us letters of safe conduct for our own security in traversing the country, and directed us to limit our escort to twenty men, as he had bound himself not to receive more into Masterton House. His word was so habitually considered law, by my brother and myself, that even had not the terms he had negociated been half so favourable, we should have submitted without hesitation; and, accordingly, selecting the twenty men whom we thought best qualified

to accompany us, we informed the rest of the troopers, of what had been done, and dismissed them, well satisfied, to their homes, giving them security for the discharge of their pay, under our own hands.

We thought it best to do this at night, at a little village on the confines of Somerset and Devonshire ; and I could not help feeling a strange sensation of regret, as troop by troop of men, with whom I had taken so much pains ; whose comfort and security had been for weeks and months a matter of so much interest to me ; who had shared with me so many fatigues, and accompanied me through some perils, passed before my eyes for the last time. I turned away somewhat sick at heart, for it was one of those moments, when a thousand hopes and anticipations blasted for ever, rise suddenly from the void of the irreversible past, like the mournful spectres of the loved and dead, that crowd into some dark and painful dream, and seem to presage new woes and sorrows for the time to come.

Most of the soldiers waited for nothing but leave to depart ; and before next morning we were left with but few besides the twenty whom we had selected for our escort. Those, whose

cooler spirits had chosen to remain, we sent by different roads, and selecting for our own journey the least frequented path that we knew, we traversed our native county, towards our home.

As we proceeded, the world of our early remembrances grew upon us. A total interruption of all old accustomed thoughts had taken place during our wanderings; but now every furlong of the road had its memory; and there was not a tree, or a rock, or a stream, or a hill, that did not recall the soft days of youth, and the things that never return. The very breeze seemed full of early days; and cloud after cloud, as the summer air drove them across the blue heavens, looked like the phantoms of all my young dreams, hurried far across the expanse of life, by the wild uncertain breath of fortune. Perhaps it might be some fitful caprice of my nature, or perhaps disappointment at the ill success of our expedition; but there was a deep gloom came over me, to which every step seemed but to add; and all the memorials of my early years excited only a sigh.

My brother also was grave; but by this time he had recovered fully, as I have said, his former self; and, within the last two days, even I had not been able to distinguish whether the

passion which had for a time so stirred his soul, was really passing away to the world of bright things forgotten; or whether it was only that he mastered its expression. If it were the latter, he enacted his part most wonderfully well; and, as if he strove to try his own powers over himself, he more than once mentioned Penford-bourne, and Lady Eleanor Fleming, as things almost indifferent. The first time he did so, I thought I could detect, by a quiver of the lip, that all was not quite calm within; but the second, and the third time, his countenance betrayed no emotion.

I felt discontented at his calmness. Why, I did not know. I had been the person to strive to withdraw him from temptation. I, it had been, who had warned him to beware of the criminal passion which he had encouraged, to beseech him to cast it off, and to tear him almost forcibly from its object. My endeavours had been successful. He had quitted the dangerous neighbourhood—he had recovered his serenity—he seemed to have thrown away, or forgotten the feelings which had betrayed him; and yet I was not contented. No! not though his demeanour towards myself was gentler, kinder, more affectionate.

I could not account for my own sensations ; and I would not, or I dared not, look closely into my own heart ; but one of those trifles—which are in some sort the lightning flashes of our dark nature, showing us in one moment of bright light, all the dim objects that fill, unseen, the world of the human breast—was destined soon to blaze it all upon my sight.

My father met us, on horseback, at the gates of the park, near a mile from the house ; and received us with a tenderness and affection which he had never displayed before. He gazed anxiously on my brother's worn and thoughtful countenance ; remarked the two deep gashes on my brow and cheek ; and pressing us alternately to his bosom, gave free course to a father's feelings, for the first time for twenty years. We turned to the house on foot, followed by our little escort. I was absent and agitated ; and my father noticed it ; but added, that it was not extraordinary that I should be so, on returning to my early home, after passing through scenes of such danger and anxiety.

As we came near the house, the sound of trampling horses, and many voices, gave notice of our approach ; and the whole household issued forth to welcome us back. Emily Lang-

leigh, lovelier than ever, was first on the terrace to greet us. Her eye turned towards me; but Frank stepped forward to receive the welcome of his promised bride, and pressed his lips upon her cheek.

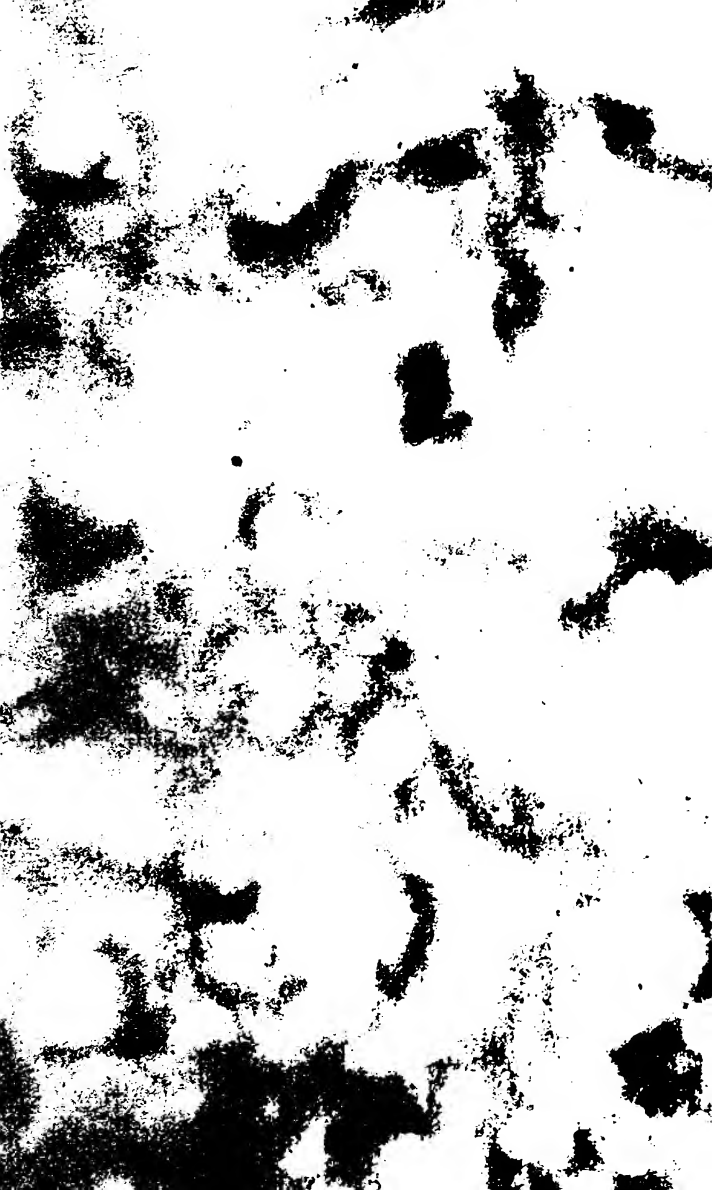
Good God! what was it that I felt? It passed through my heart and my brain like lightning! It was madness! madness itself! but it mastered all other feelings. Common sense, reflection, every thing was at an end; and, dashing past every one, I entered the house, rushed upstairs to my own bedchamber, locked the door with violent haste, and cast myself upon my bed, in prostrate misery.

I have passed through a long life; I have known many sorrows and many cares; but I never felt, or saw, or dreamed, of any thing that equalled the agony of that moment.

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